

# ***Trinity Christian School***

## ***Nursery, Primary & Secondary***



## **Exam Contingency Plan**

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## Exam Contingency Plan

This Policy supports and should be read in conjunction with the following policies and guidance:

- ✓ Exams Policy
- ✓ Word Processor (Exams) Policy
- ✓ Equalities Policy (Exams)
- ✓ JCQ General Regulations
- ✓ JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations

Role	Name(s)
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### 1. PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at Trinity Christian School. By outlining actions/procedures to be invoked in case of disruption it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on our exam process.

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by the Ofqual (and Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment) **Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland** which provides guidance in the publication *What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted* and the **JCQ Joint Contingency Plan** for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the JCQ document **Preparing for disruption to examinations** (Effective from 1 September 2023).

This plan also confirms Trinity Christian School’s compliance with JCQ’s **General Regulations for Approved Centres** (section 5.3) that the centre has in place:

- a written examination contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the Senior Leadership Team to act immediately in the event of an emergency or staff absence where the head of centre, examinations officer or SENDCo is absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle. The examination contingency plan should reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations, or on results day, owing to an unforeseen emergency. The potential impact of a cyber-attack should also be considered.

### National Centre Number Register and other information requirements

The Head of Centre will also ensure that Trinity Christian School has a contingency to enable the

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

### **Head of Centre absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle**

Where the head of centre may be absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle, main duties and responsibilities will be escalated in accordance with the centre's general Contingency Plan.

## **2. POSSIBLE CAUSES OF DISRUPTION TO THE EXAM PROCESS**

### **a. Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle) 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 the post-results services*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- SLT to seek/follow awarding body guidance/instructions.
- Communication with parents/carers and students and keeping them informed regarding solutions to the disruption (and detail on the method(s) of communication)
- The SLT will nominate a 'deputy' to shadow in case of emergency.
- Access to Exams Policies and Handbook, with guidance to follow e.g. invigilation training materials and exam room checklist etc.
- The Head of Centre to have access to AQA Centre Services and Pearson Edexcel Online.

**b. SENDCo extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle) a critical stage of the exam cycle**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

*Key tasks required in the management and administration of the access arrangements process within the exam cycle not undertaken including:*

*Planning*

- *candidates not tested/assessed to identify potential access arrangement requirements*
- *centre fails to recognise its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010*
- *evidence of need and evidence to support normal way of working not collated*

*Pre-exams*

- *approval for access arrangements not applied for to the awarding body*
- *centre-delegated arrangements not put in place*
- *modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline*
- *staff (facilitators) providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained*

*Exam time*

- *access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Exams Officer to seek/follow awarding body guidance/instructions.
- Communication with parents/carers and students and keeping them informed regarding solutions to the disruption (and detail on the method(s) of communication)
- The Exams Officer will fulfil the roles and responsibilities of the SENDCo.
- The Head of Centre to have access to AQA Centre Services and Pearson Edexcel Online.

**c. Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle) a critical stage of the exam cycle**

Criteria for implementation of the plan:*Key tasks not undertaken including:*

- *Early/estimated entry information not provided to the exams officer on time; resulting in pre-release information not being received*
- *Final entry information not provided to the exams officer on time; resulting in candidates not being entered for exams/assessments or being entered late/late or other penalty fees being charged by awarding bodies*
- *Non-examination assessment tasks not set/issued/taken by candidates as scheduled*
- *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:

- Exams Officer to seek/follow awarding body guidance/instructions.
- SLT to appoint an appropriate member of staff to cover lessons using long term plans to complete courses.
- Exams Officer to apply for special consideration for candidates.
- SLT to liaise Bradford Christian School for any help with internal assessments and course information.
- Exam calendar to be shared in advance with all staff.

**d. 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:

- SLT to invoke emergency school timetable to release invigilator trained staff for normal teaching.
- Communicating with parents/carers and students and keeping them informed regarding solutions to the disruption (and detail on the method(s) of communication)

**e. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice**Criteria for implementation of the plan:

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Exams Officer to seek/follow awarding body guidance/instructions.

- SLT to invoke emergency school timetable to release exam suitable rooms on the day of the exams.
- SLT to source alternative sites for the examinations such as St. John's Church Hall (0161 338 8199 / [office@stjohnsdukinfield.com](mailto:office@stjohnsdukinfield.com)), Stalybridge Methodist Church Hall (01613048439 / [admin@gtmethodist.org](mailto:admin@gtmethodist.org)) or Stalybridge St. Matthews Hall (0161 304 9308 / [info@hts.church](mailto:info@hts.church)).
- Exams Officer to apply for special consideration for candidates.

#### f. Cyber-attack

##### Criteria for implementation of the plan:

- *Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of delivery.*
- *Where a cyber-attack may compromise the collection of examination results.*

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

Ensure there are procedures in place to maintain the security of user accounts by:

- a) providing training for authorised staff on the importance of creating strong unique passwords and keeping all account details secret
- b) providing training for staff on awareness of all types of social engineering/ phishing attempts
- c) enabling additional security settings wherever possible
- d) updating any passwords that may have been exposed
- e) setting up secure account recovery options
- f) reviewing and managing connected applications
- g) monitoring accounts and regularly reviewing account access, including removing access when no longer required
- h) ensuring authorised members of staff securely access awarding bodies' online systems in line with awarding body regulations regarding cyber security and the JCQ document *Guidance for centres on cyber security*  
 Authorised staff will have access, where necessary, to a device which complies with awarding bodies' multi-factor authentication (MFA) requirements.
- i) reporting any actual or suspected compromise of an awarding body's online systems immediately to the relevant awarding body
- j) The Online Safety Officer is to follow guidance from the school's Web provider (Smoothwall).

#### g. Failure of IT systems

##### Criteria for implementation of the plan:

- *System failure at final entry deadline*
- *System failure during exams preparation*

- *Power outage immediately prior to or during an on-screen test*
- *System failure at results release time*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Exam Officer to complete administrative tasks at home.
- Where a PDF examination paper needs to be printed off e.g. on coloured paper, the exam papers would be opened by the Exams Officer and a second member of staff, and photocopied no more than 90 minutes before the examination.
- In the case of a power outage, the Exams Officer to apply for special consideration for pupils who would ordinarily complete their examinations on laptops or printed out modified papers.
- Exam Officer to seek guidance about emergency access arrangements.
- Ensure that candidates' work is backed-up and should consider the contingency of candidates' work being backed-up on two separate devices, including one off-site back-up. Implement appropriate security arrangements which protect candidates' work in the event of IT system corruption and cyber-attacks.

**h. 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:

- Exams Officer to seek/follow awarding body guidance/instructions.
- Where appropriate and safe, SLT to invoke emergency school timetable to release exam suitable rooms on the day of the exams.
- Where appropriate and safe, SLT to source alternative sites for the examinations such as St. John's Church Hall (0161 338 8199 / [office@stjohnsdukinfield.com](mailto:office@stjohnsdukinfield.com)), Stalybridge Methodist Church Hall (01613048439 / [admin@gtmethodist.org](mailto:admin@gtmethodist.org)) or Stalybridge St. Matthews Hall (0161 304 9308 / [info@hts.church](mailto:info@hts.church)).
- In the case of a fire evacuation, invigilators and candidates are to follow the school's Fire Safety Policy.
- In the case of a bomb alert evacuation, invigilators and candidates are to follow the school's Fire Safety Policy.
- Exams Officer to apply for special consideration for candidates.

**i. 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

- Exams Officer to seek/follow awarding body guidance/instructions.

- Subject teachers are to use Google Classroom as an online platform for delivering lessons/work.
- Communication with parents/carers and students and keeping them informed regarding solutions to the disruption (and detail on the method(s) of communication).

**j. Candidates at risk of being unable to take examinations - centre remains open**

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

- *Candidates may not be able to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Exams Officer to seek/follow awarding body guidance/instructions.
- Subject teachers are to use Google Classroom as an online platform for delivering lessons/work.
- Communication with parents/carers and students and keeping them informed regarding solutions to the disruption (and detail on the method(s) of communication).
- Exams Officer to apply to the exam boards for Remote Invigilation (see Arrangements for Conducting Exams in the Candidates Home).

**k. Centre at risk of being unable may not be able to open as normal during the examination period**

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

- *Centre may not be able to open as normal for scheduled examinations*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Exams Officer to seek/follow awarding body guidance/instructions.
- SLT to source alternative sites for the examinations such as St. John's Church Hall (0161 338 8199 / [office@stjohnsdukinfield.com](mailto:office@stjohnsdukinfield.com)), Stalybridge Methodist Church Hall (01613048439 / [admin@gtmethodist.org](mailto:admin@gtmethodist.org)) or Stalybridge St. Matthews Hall (0161 304 9308 / [info@hts.church](mailto:info@hts.church)).
- Exams Officer to apply for special consideration for candidates.

**l. 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:

- Exams Officer to seek/follow awarding body guidance/instructions.
- Where possible, examination papers to be printed off by Exams Officer.

**m. 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:

- Examinations are to be securely stored in the exams cupboard until they are collected.
- Exams Officer to seek/follow awarding body guidance/instructions.

**n. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked**

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

- *Large scale damage to or destruction of completed examination scripts/assessment evidence before it can be marked*
- *Completed examination scripts/assessment evidence does not reach awarding organisations*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Exams Officer to seek/follow awarding body guidance/instructions.
- Exams Officer to work with subject teacher to generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding organisations.
- Where marks cannot be generated by awarding organisations candidates may need to retake affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series.

**o. Centre unable to distribute results as normal or facilitate post results services**

(Including in the event of the centre being unavailable on results day owing to an unforeseen emergency)

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Exams Officer to seek/follow awarding body guidance/instructions.
- The Exams Officer will access results at her home.
- SLT will make arrangements to distribute the results at an alternative site, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation, such as St. John's Church Hall (0161 338 8199 / [office@stjohnsdukinfield.com](mailto:office@stjohnsdukinfield.com)), Stalybridge Methodist Church Hall (01613048439 / [admin@gtmethodist.org](mailto:admin@gtmethodist.org)) or Stalybridge St. Matthews Hall (0161 304 9308 / [info@hts.church](mailto:info@hts.church)).
- The Exams Officer and the Head of Centre will coordinate to access the post results services from an alternative site e.g. their homes.

### 3. 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: [Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges - Cyber security standards for schools and colleges - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-digital-and-technology-standards-in-schools-and-colleges)

Cyber crime and cyber security: a guide for education providers: [Cyber crime and cyber security: a guide for education providers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/cyber-crime-and-cyber-security-a-guide-for-education-providers)

DfE Cyber Security Guidance - March 2023: [DfE-Cyber-Security-Guidance-March-2023.pdf \(theexamsoffice.org\)](https://theexamsoffice.org/DfE-Cyber-Security-Guidance-March-2023.pdf)

### Ofqual:

#### **What schools and colleges and other centres 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 to centres on exam contingency plans](#) and [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**

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](#).
6. Communicate with students, parents and carers 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 to the relevant awarding organisation 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 are able to 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, 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
- [exceptional closure days](#) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- [checklist - exceptional closure of schools](#) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- [school terms and school closures](#) from NI Direct
- [opening schools as well as childcare and play settings in extreme bad weather and extreme hot weather](#) - guidance for schools from the Welsh Government
- [emergency planning and response guidance for education and childcare settings](#)- guidance for schools and education settings from the Welsh Government
- [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

(Ofqual guidance extract above 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** (last updated 5 October 2023)

<https://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>)

### JCQ:

15.1 The qualification regulators, awarding bodies and government departments responsible for education have prepared and agreed information for schools and colleges in the event of examinations being seriously disrupted. This jointly agreed information will ensure consistency of response in the event of major disruption to the examinations system affecting significant numbers of candidates. Further information may be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

15.2 In addition, awarding bodies have their own well-established contingency plans in place to respond to disruptions. It is important that exams officers who are facing disruption liaise directly with the relevant awarding body/bodies.

15.3 All centres must have a written 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 In the event that the head of centre decides the centre cannot be opened for scheduled examinations, the relevant awarding body must be informed as soon as possible. Awarding bodies will be able to offer advice regarding the alternative arrangements for conducting examinations that may be available and the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations.

15.5 The awarding bodies will designate 'contingency sessions' for examinations, summer 2024. This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document *Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland*: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

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

In the event of national disruption to a day of examinations in summer 2024, the awarding bodies will liaise with the qualification regulators and government departments to agree the most appropriate option for managing the impact. As a last resort the affected examinations will be rescheduled. Although every effort would be taken to keep the impact to a minimum, it is possible that there could be more than one timetable date affected following the disruption, up to and including the last contingency day. Centres will be alerted if it is agreed to reschedule the examinations and the affected candidates will be expected to make themselves available in such circumstances. The decision regarding the rescheduling of examinations will always rest with the awarding body. The centre must conduct the examination on the scheduled date unless instructed to do otherwise by the awarding body.

Where candidates choose not to be available for the rescheduled examination(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.

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

JCQ Joint Contingency Plan [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents)

JCQ Preparing for disruption to examinations [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/)

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

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

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

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



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

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

Guidance for centres on cyber security (Effective from November 2023) [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/)

Information for centres affected by RAAC - the delivery of non-examination assessments and the special consideration process [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/non-examination-assessments/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/non-examination-assessments/)

## GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response: Exam and assessment disruption  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings](http://www.gov.uk/government/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  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service)

## Wales

School closures: examinations [gov.wales/school-closures-examinations](http://gov.wales/school-closures-examinations)  
Opening schools in extremely bad weather and extreme hot weather: [www.gov.wales/opening-schools-well-childcare-and-play-settings-extreme-bad-weather-and-extreme-hot-weather](http://www.gov.wales/opening-schools-well-childcare-and-play-settings-extreme-bad-weather-and-extreme-hot-weather)

## Northern Ireland

Exceptional closure days [www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days)  
Checklist for Principals when considering Opening or Closure of School - exceptional closure of schools [www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools)

## National Cyber Security Centre

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

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

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

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

1. [Further ransomware attacks on UK education by cyber criminals - NCSC.GOV.UK](#)
2. [Mitigating malware and ransomware attacks](#)
3. [Offline backups in an online world](#)
4. [Backing up your data](#)
5. [Practical resources to help schools improve their cyber security](#)
6. [Building Resilience: Ransomware, the risk to schools and ways to prevent it](#)

[School staff offered training to help shore up cyber defences - NCSC.GOV.UK](#)