Examination Contingency Plan

Centre name	The Roundhill Academy
Centre number	25327
Date policy reviewed	31 October 2026
Policy approved by	Natalie Teece
Policy reviewed by	Julia Rann
Date of next review	30 September 2027

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Names
Head of Centre	Natalie Teece
SLT Member with responsibility for Exams	Julia Rann
SENDCO	Samantha Auger
Examinations Manager	Tania Taylor

This plan is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that contingency planning at The Roundhill Academy is managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations.

To be read in conjunction with:

- Cyber Contingency Plan
- JCQ Cyber Security
- Special Consideration Policy
- Responsibility Flowchart

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Purpose of the plan

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

By outlining actions/procedures to be invoked in case of disruption it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on processes at The Roundhill Academy.

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 document *What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted* and the JCQ guidance **Preparing for disruption to examinations**.

This plan also confirms how The Roundhill Academy complies with JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres** (5.3 *Centre management*) by:

- having in place for inspection that must be reviewed and updated annually by a member of the senior leadership team and communicated within the centre, a contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination/assessment administration and delivery
- its contingency planning including succession arrangements for membrs of staff involved in examination and assessment administration

Contingency arrangements

The centre **must** have in place, and at all times comply with, 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 manager 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 3.31-36)

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 is unavailable, then the escalation process will move to the Assistant Headteacher KS4 and the Deputy Head of School.

Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

1. Exams Manager 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

Other criteria:

The Exams secure storage area requires multiple keys holders. The Roundhill Academy keyholders are Tania Taylor, Examinations Manager and Jenny Ellis, Data Manager and Julia Rann, Assistant Headteacher with responsibiltiy for Exams, having a key to access the door to the secure store and the code for the key safe retained within the secure store.

<u>Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above</u>

The centre will:

In case of Exam Manager's absence falling during key exam/assessment stages, the Head of Centre and the Senior Leadership Team are to ensure that trained, knowledgeable admin staff are available to keep the exams office running without accruing late fees and disadvantaging students.

If the majority of preparatory administrative work has been completed in advance, then there is capacity within the school to cover a short-term absence of the Exams Manager. However, in case of the Exam Manager's longer-term absence, or, where more technical support is required, the involvement of experienced / suitable staff from Wreake Valley may be sought.

Additional help could be called upon by an experienced Exam Invigilator.

Head of Centre to appoint member of administrative staff to take over responsibilities should absence of the Exams Manager have a potential to affect the meeting of deadlines.

The appointed staff member to work closely with Exams Manager to ensure they are up to date with the exam cycle and responsibilities at each point in time.

On an ongoing basis, Exams Manager to update the Assistant Headteacher KS4 in charge of Exams and Assessments with all exam related issues and copy all correspondence to her. The Data Manager has access to –

- Keys to unlock the doors on the secure storage
- keys to open the secure cabinet containing the exam papers
- Passwords to access AO secure websites
- Invigilators have access to phone number to contact the exams staff in emergencies.

On days of exams, in Exams Manager's absence, the following steps must be carried out in the Secure Storage Room by the Data Manager:

<u>90 minutes prior to start of the exam session</u>:

- open the security storage room and the security cabinet.
- with an Invigilator's help, check and log the papers being taken out of storage (Second Pairs of Eyes) for that session's exams (to ensure correct 'live' papers have been extracted out of the storage cabinet).
- with an Invigilator's help, batch the papers for individual exam rooms and ensure that each packet is sealed. Care must be taken to ensure all required access arrangements have been addressed (e.g. Modified Enlarged papers, coloured copies).

<u>60 minutes prior to start of the exam session</u>:

- access the appropriate AO's secure websites and select the correct papers to be printed for the relevant candidate. Where coloured copies are required – if access to the secure websites is not possible, use one of the papers from the paper packets.
- print onto coloured papers for candidates with such requirements (this must be done in a secure room with no other staff present). The printed papers must be sealed for each exam room and stored in the secure storage cabinet along with the correct papers.

The Data Manager to deliver the sealed 'Live' papers plus the printed papers (in a sealed envelope) to the correct exam rooms where the relevant candidates are sat for the exam session.

<u>During the exam session</u>:

- oversee the conduct of the exam by the invigilators.

- ensure all rules and regulations are being followed per JCQ's ICE booklet.

- be available for any emergencies during exams for instance:

- for any exam paper issues where more than three candidates have raised concerns to invigilators, first seek help of the subject Head of Department to see if a possible printing error has been identified and, in the absence of an erratum notice, it needs to be verified by the relevant Head of Department before escalating the issue to the awarding body. If this is required, then call the relevant exam board to inform them of the printing-issue.

- emergency evacuation during exams: if the fire alarm rings, then follow the procedures set out in the Centre's Emergency Evacuation Policy.

<u>At the end of the exam session:</u>

- ensure all exam scripts are collected and collated correctly by Invigilators.

- ensure all exam scripts are accounted for and investigate any missing scripts.

- once all scripts have been accounted for, securely seal all the envelopes and complete the Parcelforce Log with details of all the packages.

- oversee dispatch of the packages and the log-sheet to the School Reception 15 minutes before the scheduled collection time.

- Inform Reception-Staff of the exam scripts and to securely lock them up in Reception until collected by Parcelforce courier.

- If the exam has finished very late in the afternoon (past Parcelforce's collection time), then take the sealed exam packages and the pertaining log-sheet to the Exam Secure Storage Cabinet and lock them up overnight, ready for collection the next day.

Towards the end of the day:

Call Reception to ensure all exam scripts from the earlier sessions have been collected by Parcelforce. If not yet collected, collect the packages and the pertaining log-sheet from Reception and lock them in the Exam Secure Storage Cabinet overnight, ready for collection the next day.

The next day:

Take exam packages from the previous day's exams and the log-sheets to the School Reception 15 minutes before the scheduled collection time.

Inform Reception-Staff of the exam scripts and to securely lock them up in Reception until collected by Parcelforce courier.

Follow the steps outlined above for each exam session, daily until the end of the exam series / the return of the exams Manager back to duties.

2. SENDCO (or equivalent role) 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 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 listed above

The centre will:

- Head of Centre responsible for ensuring position is filled should SENDCO's absence have a potential to disrupt exam preparation.

- Exams Manager/Assistant SENDCO to ensure access arrangements are in place by the spring term of Year 10 for all students where possible.

- Exams Manager/Assistant SENDCO to plan access arrangements for exam days in advance of the summer exam series, in consultation with SENDCO.

- Ensure that the spreadsheet for Access Arrangements is readily available and can be accessed centrally

3. **Teaching staff** (or other key staff essential to the examination process) **extended absence at 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 Manager on time; resulting in pre-release information not being received

- Final entry information not provided to the Exams Manager 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 (including controlled assessment and coursework) 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:

- Exams Manager responsible for ensuring deadlines are met for estimated entries. Any omissions to be referred to Head of Centre.

- Head of Centre responsible to ensure the priority for teaching is the examination cohort and staff will be covered in good time, by trained professionals, in all circumstances.

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:

- Exams Manager responsible for recruitment of invigilators in the autumn term ahead of the summer series.

- Advance planning required to ensure enough are available for each exam session.

- Train internal staff to use on peak exam days. A list of trained staff is available from the Exams Manager and the Data Manager (copy at the back of this policy)

- Head of Centre to recruit more invigilators when necessary.

5. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venue(s) unavailable at short notice

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Exams Manager 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

- Secure store in accessible due to an emergency

- Exams Manager to ensure planning of rooms is completed by the end of the spring term to identify potential rooming issues.

- Alternative venues within the school to be made available by teaching staff in the event of an unexpected incident.

- Head of Centre to liaise with Exams Manager to ensure no disruptions arise due to room shortages.

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 Roundhill Academy has a reciprocal agreement with Wreake Valley Academy

- Where the trust schools are all affected by an unexpected incident at the time of exams, The Roundhill Academy has a reciprocal agreement with The Cedars Academy in Birstall

- Where it becomes impossible to print coloured papers The Roundhill Academy has an agreement with Bishop Ellis Primary School to use their secure printing facilities

- Where the secure store becomes inaccessible the Exams Manager will contact the relevant awarding body immediately to arrange alternative delivery of examination material.

Alternative site(s) details:

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

Communication details:

- any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue via Arbor messaging system

- 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 •

6. **Cyber security** and amended criteria for implementation of the plan

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:

- immediately notify the relevant awarding body(ies) and JCQ
- 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 Roundhill Academy has a reciprocal agreement with Wreake Valley Academy
- Where is becomes impossible to print coloured papers The Roundhill Academy has an agreement with Bishop Ellis Primary School to use their secure printing facilities
- In the event of a cyber attack affecting Bradgate Education Partnership, The Roundhill Academy has a reciprocal agreement with The Cedars Academy in Birstall
- 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

7. 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:

- immediately notify the relevant awarding body(ies) and JCQ
- 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 Roundhill Academy has a reciprocal agreement with Wreake Valley Academy
- Where is becomes impossible to print coloured papers The Roundhill Academy has an agreement with Bishop Ellis Primary School to use their secure printing facilities
- In the event of a cyber attack affecting Bradgate Education Partnership The Roundhill Academy has a reciprocal agreement with The Cedars Academy, Birstall
- 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

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

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

Communication details:

Parents/carers and candidates will be informed via Arbor messaging system. The Roundhill Academy 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

10. Candidates may not be able 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 because of an emergency or other event, outside of the candidate's control

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 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:

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

11. Centre may not be able to open for examinations

(including in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency for example flooding or fire)

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 listed above

The centre will:

- Focus on enabling candidates to take their examinations
- (although the decision on whether it is safe to open lies with the head of centre) 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 (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)
- 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 Wreake Valley Academy, Parkstone Road, Syston, Leicester, LE7 1LY
The Cedars Academy, Wanlip Lane, Birstall, Leicester, LE4 4GH

Communication details:

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

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, for example in the event of flood or fire in the secure room area

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:

- ensure candidates are kept under supervision whilst preparations are made to obtain examination papers to enable the examination to go ahead.

- apply for special consideration for affected candidates

13. Delay in collection arrangements for 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 organisations arrange collections, seek advice from the relevant awarding organisations and will not make its own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding organisation

- for any examinations where the centre makes its own arrangements for transportation, investigate alternative dispatch options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ document *Instructions for conducting examinations*

- keep completed examination scripts in the secure room until as close to the collection time as possible - ensuring script packages are not left unattended in the collection area

14. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- liaise 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

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:

- 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 site(s) details:

The Wreake Valley Academy.

- 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:

The Examinations Manager will contact parents and candidates to arrange alternative delivery of results (email, in person, or at alternative venue)

16. Any other cause of disruption to the exam process

Cause of disruption

- Fire or flooding in exam rooms or secure store

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

- 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:

- ensure candidates are kept under supervision whilst preparations are made to obtain examination papers to enable the examination to go ahead.

- apply for special consideration for affected candidates

Resilience Planning

The centre will retain Year 11 mock examination papers sat in formal conditions as part of the gathering of evidence of candidate performance in line with the published Ofqual guidelines Guidance on collecting evidence of student performance to ensure resilience in the qualifications system

- Year 11 mock examinations will take place in January when students will have been taught a large part of their course.
- Students will not know the questions in the assessment beforehand
- Students will not have access to any books or revision notes
- All exams will be invigilated in formal conditions with external invigilators in attendance
- Mock exams will be assessed under timed conditions equivalent to those under which they would expect to complete their GCSE and BTEC/CNAT examinations. The exception to this are full day Art and Textiles exams which are allocated 50% time for practical/staffing reasons.
- Students who miss their mock examinations will be given a further opportunity to take the exam but will be given a different exam paper to ensure that students cannot predict the materials they are going to be assessed on.
- Access arrangements will be used in accordance with those specified by the SENDCO.
- The importance of the mocks will be made clear to students before the assessments go ahead.
- A record will be kept of those students for whom special consideration would be given in the summer examination period for example in the event of illness and family bereavement.
- Grades will be issued to students, but teachers will make it clear that these grades are not an indication of what their final grade would be if it became necessary to award a qualification using the evidence.
- Teachers will provide feedback on the mocks but will not allow repeat assessments with the same questions.

Retention of students work

Student work, either the original or a copy will be retained by the centre. This may be digitally or physically. Students may be given copies of their original work where this would support their study.

Where it is beneficial for students to annotate their work for their progress this will be clear, i.e. a different colour pen or highlighter, so the original work is obvious and readable

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** What schools, colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted - GOV.UK

"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 Handbook: General Conditions of Recognition - Section A - Governance - Guidance - GOV.UK 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

- 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

opening schools, 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

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

Links to other JCQ documentation
Preparing for disruption to exams – Joint Council for Qualifications
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
Information for centres affected by RAAC – the delivery of non-examination assessments and the special consideration process
Further clarification for centres affected by RAAC, Caledonian Modular or similar building issues – March 2024

GOV.UK
Emergency planning and response: Exam and assessment disruption
Dispatch of exam scripts guide: Ensuring the service runs smoothly; Contingency planning

National Cyber Security Centre
Cyber Security for Schools
Cyber security training for school staff