



Exam Contingency Plan

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

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Purpose of the plan

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

Alongside internal processes this plan is informed by the Ofqual Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland which provides guidance in the publication, 'What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted', 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 2024).

This plan also confirms Linwood School compliance with JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres** (GR 5.3) that the centre has in place for inspection that must be reviewed and updated annually:

- a written contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination/assessment administration and delivery

Contingency arrangements

In accordance with the regulations (GR 3.17-19), Linwood School **must** have an up to date written contingency plan.

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

The plan must cover the following scenarios:

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

As part of the contingency plan the centre **must** identify an alternative site 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.

Linwood School **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.



Linwood School **must** 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. Appropriate security arrangements must be implemented which protect candidates' work in the event of IT system corruption and cyber-attacks.

Key staff at Linwood School

Exams Office

Examinations and Assessment Manager – Sarah Hawkins

Examinations Administrator – Aingie Hancock

Both staff members are familiar with current exams administration and procedures. Therefore, each can cover the roles and duties of the other in case of absence.

Head of Campuses – Ms Teresa Brennan

Familiar with exams processes and procedures and able to deputise on exam days and assist with planning tasks as required.

BTEC Lead Internal Verifier – Quality Nominee – Lee Rockingham

If Lee Rockingham is absent Long Term, Karen Taylor also able to carry out QN/Lead IV role.

National Centre Number Register and other information requirements

In accordance with the regulations (GR 5.3), the head of centre will ensure that Linwood School responds to the National Centre Number Register annual update by the end of October every year 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.

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 written escalation process to Teresa Brennan – Head of Campuses.

Causes of potential disruption to the exam process

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the exam cycle not undertaken including:

	Criteria for implementation of the plan	Centre Actions
1. Exams officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle)		
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to exams procedures manual / action planner Both Exams/Data Manager and Exams/Data Administrator able to action and cover in each other absence Escalation to Teresa Brennan Senior Leadership team member responsible for assessments/examinations if additional resources required.
Entries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 Internal exams database not updated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both Exams/Data Manager and Exams/Data Administrator able to action and cover in each other absence Refer to Accreditation checklist and folder Escalation to Teresa Brennan Head of Campuses if additional resources required. Refer to exams procedures manual / action planner
Pre-Exams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both Exams/Data Manager and Exams/Data Administrator able to action and cover in each other absence Lee Rockingham Assistant Head able to support in exam timetabling, room and invigilator allocation. Escalation to Teresa Brennan Had of Campuses if additional resources required. Refer to exams procedures manual / action planner for guidance.

	Criteria for implementation of the plan	Centre Actions
	<p>stored under required secure conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> internal assessment marks and samples of candidates' work not submitted to awarding bodies/external moderators 	
Exam Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 scripts, equipment and other confidential materials not transported to exam venue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both Exams/Data Manager and Exams/Data Administrator able to action and cover in each other absence Teresa Brennan – Head of Campus able to cover in Exams Officer Absence Refer to exams procedures manual / action planner Refer to Exam Day Checklist Publish timetables and checklists so all staff aware of deadlines Seek advice from awarding body
Results And Post-Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates the facilitation of the post-results services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both Exams/Data Manager and Exams/Data Administrator able to action and cover in each other absence Teresa Brennan – Head of Campus able to cover in Exams Office staff Absence Seek advice from awarding body Refer to exams procedures manual / action planner
2. Phase Leaders/Senco extended absence at key points in the exam cycle		
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Escalate to Lee Rockingham – Assistant Headteacher senior leadership team responsible for Exam & Assessment across campuses List of Senco trained staff available to deputise in Lee Rockingham Senco absence with Exam/Data Manager Support.

	Criteria for implementation of the plan	Centre Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> approval for entries not obtained 	
Pre-Exams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> approval for access arrangements not applied for to the awarding body centre-delegated arrangements not put in place modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline staff providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exam/data Administrator able with support from Lee Rockingham Assistant Head/Senco able to cover.
Exam time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exam/data Administrator able with support from Lee Rockingham Assistant Head/Senco able to cover.
<h3>3. Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle</h3>		
	<p><i>Key tasks not undertaken including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 (including controlled assessments and coursework) tasks not set/issued/taken by candidates as scheduled Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet awarding body submission deadlines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phase Leaders provide information as part of covering teaching staff duties, supported by Exams Office Escalate to Lee Rockingham – Assistant Headteacher senior leadership team responsible for Exam & Assessment across campuses

	Criteria for implementation of the plan	Centre Actions
4. Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to train sufficient invigilators to conduct exams • Invigilator shortage on peak exam days • Invigilator absence on the day of an exam 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All TA's at Summerwood & CHI trained and complete annual update training. • More TA trained as invigilators than required for exam days. • CHI and Summerwood staff can be used at each campus to make sure required number of invigilators not involved in subject available. • Exam Administrator trained to cover any absence on exam day. • Planed for cover in case of unexpected absence
5. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • Exam room unavailable e.g. due to flooding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source alternative venues at other campuses:- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Linwood School Campus Alma Road, Bournemouth, BH1 9AJ 2) Summerwood Campus Nortoft Road Charminster, Bournemouth, Dorset BH8 8QB 3) Springwood Campus Andrew's Close, Springwater Road, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH11 8HB • Arrange transport for candidates • Communicate with candidates (parent/carers where appropriate) any changes • Apply for alternative site • Seek advice from awarding body • Ensure safe transportation of question papers or assessment materials • Consider whether any special consideration needs to be applied for if candidate level of attainment has been materially affected
6. Cyber-attack		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT to determine which IT systems and data are vital for the operating of the school. • Backup of data are made and these are kept separate from the physical network • IT keeping upto date with latest threat and mitigation information. • Inform other organisations if we have access to there systems • to prevent any unauthorised access.

	Criteria for implementation of the plan	Centre Actions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue. • take advice offered by the awarding body on the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations • Follow IT policy and procedures in relation to cyber-attack/internet safety. This includes (GR 3.21) procedures in place to maintain the security of user accounts by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 <i>Guidance for centres on cyber security</i> Authorised staff will have access, where necessary, to a device which complies with awarding bodies' multi-factor authentication (MFA) requirements. • reporting any actual or suspected compromise of an awarding body's online systems immediately to the relevant awarding body
7. Failure of IT systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative systems generally available

	Criteria for implementation of the plan	Centre Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IT System corruption affecting candidates work. MIS System failure at final entry deadline MIS System failure during exams preparation Power outage immediately prior to or during an on-screen test MIS System failure at results release time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linwood School ensures that candidates' work is backed-up on two separate devices, including one off-site back-up, on a nightly basis to implement appropriate security arrangements which protect candidates' work in the event of IT system corruption and cyber-attacks. Contact IT department to access candidate work from back up. MIS System failure for website base systems log on from laptop or alternative site. If power outage immediately prior or during examination. Speak to IT if not immediately being fixed, relocate to alternative site. Laptops are fully charged prior to examination so will be able to save work before pausing/ending examination. Contact awarding body immediately to seek advice.
8. Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down)		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole centre evacuation (or lock down) during exam time due to serious incident resulting in exam candidates being unable to start, proceed with or complete their exams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to Emergency Evacuation Policy (Exams) Relocate to alternative site Make sure candidates remain supervised under exam conditions. Seek guidance from awarding body(ies) Apply for special consideration for candidates if their level of attainment has been materially affected
9. Disruption of teaching time – centre closed for an extended period		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centre closed or candidates are unable to attend for an extended period during normal teaching or study supported time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning Centre closed interrupting the of normal teaching and learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognise it remains the responsibility of the centre to prepare students, as usual, for examinations in the case of modular courses, centres may advise candidates to sit examinations in an alternative series The centre to communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this. [Joint Contingency Plan (JCP) scenario 1] facilitate alternative methods of learning i.e. remote learning take advice offered by the awarding body regarding alternative arrangements

	Criteria for implementation of the plan	Centre Actions
		<p>for conducting examinations that may be available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take advice offered by the awarding body on the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations •
<p>10. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open</p>		
	<p>Candidates are unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider moving the starting time of the examination for all candidates (see section 6.2 of the JCQ document Instructions for conducting examinations) • Be aware of the rules for very late arrivals (see section 21 of the JCQ document Instructions for conducting examinations) • Wherever possible, it is always in the best interest for candidates to sit the examination. However, special consideration is an option where a candidate is unable to sit the examination (see Chapter 4 of the JCQ document A guide to the special consideration process) • The relevant awarding body should be contacted if additional support or guidance in the event of disruption to examinations is required • The centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue. • 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 • The centre to communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issue.

	Criteria for implementation of the plan	Centre Actions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 advise candidates, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date
11. Centre unable to open as normal during the exams period		
	<p>Centre unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations (including centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The decision on whether it is safe for a centre to open lies with the head of centre who is responsible for taking advice or following instructions from relevant local or national agencies 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 (CAP).) See section 5 for alternative site information and guide. 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 Alternative sites considered & applied for. Special consideration applied for as appropriate. [JCP scenario 4] communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue consider whether any candidates' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration. Special consideration is an option if all other

	Criteria for implementation of the plan	Centre Actions
		avenues have been exhausted and candidates meet the published criteria
12. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers		
	Disruption to the distribution of examination papers to the centre in advance of examinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The centre to communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery of papers. This may be by electronic copies in which case secure printing facilities available at Linwood Campus [JCP scenario 2] Awarding organisations to provide centres with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network. Exams/Data Manager to ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions. as a last resort, and in close collaboration with centres and regulators, awarding organisations to consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date)
13. Delay in collection arrangements for completed examination scripts		
	Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding bodies arrange collections, Exams Office should contact the relevant awarding bodies for advice and instructions for examinations where Linwood School make their own collection arrangements, Exam/Data Manager should investigate alternative dispatch options that comply with the JCQ document Instructions for conducting examinations Exam Office staff to ensure secure storage of completed examination scripts until as close to the collection time as possible)
14. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked		
	Large scale damage to or destruction of completed examination scripts/assessment evidence before it can be marked	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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

	Criteria for implementation of the plan	Centre Actions
	Completed examination scripts/assessment evidence does not reach awarding organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where marks cannot be generated by awarding body, inform candidates they may need to retake the affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series • Linwood school will retain electronic copies of word-processed scripts. These will be stored on individual data sticks in the secure filing until results day. If scripts are lost in transit Exam/Data manager to liaise with awarding body. Gemma Talbot Head of Centre to confirm in writing to the awarding body that files have been kept secure.
15. Centre unable to distribute results as normal		
	Centre is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates, or to facilitate post-results services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exams Office to make arrangements to access its results at an alternative site in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation. • Exam Office to make arrangements to coordinate access to post results services from an alternative site • centres to share facilities with other centres if this is possible, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation. • centres to contact the relevant awarding organisation 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 <p>Source alternative venues at other campuses:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4) Linwood School Campus Alma Road, Bournemouth, BH1 9AJ 5) Summerwood Campus Nortoft Road Charminster, Bournemouth, Dorset BH8 8QB 6) Springwood Campus Andrew's Close, Springwater Road, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH11 8HB

Causes 8-14 – all scenarios, criteria and specific communications have been taken directly from the *Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*.

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

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, invigilators 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 [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

- 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: Northern Ireland](#) 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, 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

(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 7 May 2024) <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

8. 15. CONTINGENCY PLANNING

9. 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>

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. 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.

13. 15.4 In the event that the head of centre decides the centre cannot be opened for scheduled examinations, the centre's contingency plan must be invoked, utilising the centre's alternative site(s) and the relevant awarding bodies must be informed as soon as possible. Awarding bodies will be able to offer advice regarding the alternative arrangements for conducting examinations that may be available and the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations.

14. 15.5 The awarding bodies will designate 'contingency sessions' for examinations, summer 2025. This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document [Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland](#).

15. 15.6 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.

16. 15.7 In the event of national disruption to a day of examinations in summer 2025, 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.

17. 15.8 Where candidates choose not to be available for the rescheduled examination(s) for reasons other than those traditionally covered by special consideration, they will not be eligible for enhanced grading 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.

18. (JCQ guidance above taken directly from **Instructions for conducting examinations 2024-2025** <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

19. JCQ Preparing for disruption to examinations www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/
General Regulations for Approved Centres www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations



Guidance notes on alternative site arrangements www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms

Guidance notes for transferred candidates www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms

Instructions for conducting examinations 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

- Guidance for centres on cyber security (Effective from November 2023) www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/
- 5 tips to get exam ready and stay cyber safe! www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/blogs/
- 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/
- Further clarification for centres affected by RAAC, Caledonian Modular or similar building issues – March 2024 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

Dispatch of exam scripts guide: Ensuring the service runs smoothly; Contingency planning

www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service

Wales

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

Opening schools as well as childcare and play settings in extreme bad weather and extreme hot weather:

www.gov.wales/opening-schools-well-childcare-and-play-settings-extreme-bad-weather-and-extreme-hot-weather

Northern Ireland

Exceptional closure days – Northern Ireland www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days

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

National Cyber Security Centre

- Cyber Security for Schools <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/education-skills/cyber-security-schools>
- Cyber security training for school staff <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/information/cyber-security-training-schools>