



# GUISELEY SCHOOL

## Exam Contingency Plan

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<b>Governors' Committee:</b>	Curriculum Standards and Effectiveness
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Deputy Headteacher – Curriculum

## Key staff involved in the plan

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	Paul Clayton Headteacher
Dir Exams & Assessments	Stephen Vasey
Exams Officer	Ray Allen
ALS lead/SENCo	Kim Ratcliffe/Oluchi Yusef
Senior leader(s)	P Carney Deputy Head Teacher, K Cook Assistant Head, C McGirr Assistant Head, R Probert Assistant Head, R Wood Assistant Head, H Ogden Director 6 <sup>th</sup> Form

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## Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at Guiseley 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 Guiseley School 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 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, 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 Guiseley School as 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.

## Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

### 1. Exam officer extended absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle

#### Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

#### *Planning*

- *annual data collection exercise not undertaken to collate information on qualifications and awarding body specifications being delivered*
- *annual exams plan not produced identifying essential key tasks, key dates and deadlines*
- *sufficient invigilators not recruited*

#### *Entries*

- *awarding bodies not being informed of early/estimated entries which prompts release of early information required by teaching staff*
- *candidates not being entered with awarding bodies for external exams/assessment*
- *awarding body entry deadlines missed or late or other penalty fees being incurred*

#### *Pre-exams*

- *invigilators not trained or updated on changes to instructions for conducting exams*
- *exam timetabling, rooming allocation; and invigilation schedules not prepared*
- *candidates not briefed on exam timetables and awarding body information for candidates*
- *confidential exam/assessment materials and candidates' work not stored under required secure conditions*

- *internal assessment marks and samples of candidates' work not submitted to awarding bodies/external moderators*

#### *Exam time*

- *exams/assessments not taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding bodies*
- *required reports/requests not submitted to awarding bodies during exam/assessment periods, for example very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration*
- *candidates' scripts not dispatched as required for marking to awarding bodies*

#### *Results and post-results*

- *access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates*
- *the facilitation of the post-results services*

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

- SLT to nominate a 'deputy' to cover the role & tasks. This maybe an Exams Assistant or extra support could be called on from the Lead Invigilator.
- Extra hours should be allocated to the 'deputy' to ensure that important pre-exams preparation tasks and entry deadlines are met.
- Exams Officer 'shadowed' by SLT Line Manager (Steve Vasey) throughout the academic year; and kept informed of potential planning & procedural interruptions & issues that will impact the examination process in school.
- Exams Officer to ensure that the school exam policies comply with JCQ ICE & requirements.
- Exams Officer to prepare internal/external exam timetables and meet with SLT-LM to agree external invigilator recruitment & training needs in advance of the main exam season.
- SLT to be aware that duplicate Exams Office keys are kept with Ray Allen Exams Officer, Head of Centre, & Site Manager.
- The Exams Data Manager to ensure that Key Holders are trained in the secure handling of exams paperwork as required by JCQ.
- Where there are insufficient exam papers due to late entries; the exam paper may be securely photocopied. Two members of the Invigilation team/EO must be present when photocopying exam papers.
- Exam papers maybe opened within 90 minutes of the awarding body published starting time for the examination in order to make them up into more appropriately sized sets for different rooms. However, it is strongly recommended that non-interactive electronic PDF versions of exam papers is accessed via the awarding bodies secure extranet site is used for this purpose for the avoidance of human error.
- To avoid potential breaches of security care must be taken to ensure the correct question paper packets are opened. A "second pair of eyes"- a member of centre staff who can be an invigilator must check the day, date, time, subject, unit/component and tier of entry, immediately BEFORE a Question Paper is opened. This check must be recorded.
- Exams Office to ensure all erratum notices are clearly identified with the exam papers; and the Lead Invigilator is aware of the erratum notice when opening the exam papers in the exam room.
- Where the exam erratum notice has not been communicated to the candidates and this is noted during the exam. Stop the exam and inform the candidates; apply to the exam board for special consideration. If the exam has concluded apply for special consideration.

## **2. SENCo 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

- Oluchi Yusuf SENCO will deputise in the absence of Kim Ratcliffe Lead SENCO
- SLT to appoint a qualified assessor to test candidates in place of the Lead SENCO/SENCO
- SLT to be aware of JCQ timetable for approval and/or submission for approval of candidate access arrangements so allowing sufficient time to implement above.
- Wendy Managham Student Support Officer to arrange student support during all exams; with the Exams Office.

**3. Teaching staff 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 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

- Heads of Curriculum responsible for omitted entries, coursework/assessment marks in the absence of a member of the teaching staff.
- Exam entries must be made on time to meet deadlines and avoid late fees. Amendments can be made at a later date to confirm final entries.
- Heads of Curriculum to be aware of the external exams/assessment schedules & work to the exam board deadlines for candidate coursework and mark submissions

**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

- Exams Officer to check availability of external invigilators in advance of main exam season.
- Refer to SLT-LM where recruitment & training of further external invigilators is required.
- Refer to SLT-LM where invigilator numbers fall below JCQ minimum thresholds.
- Check availability of other invigilators who have indicated availability for the session.
- Check with the Cover Manager for freed staff who have not been used for the period(s) concerned.
- Some support staff have attended training so could invigilate in an emergency.
- Consider possibility of amalgamating any access arrangement rooms to release an invigilator.
- Call upon SLT to invigilate exam.

## 5. 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 identify appropriate rooms in advance of the exam season; and book these rooms via MIS notifying room changes to teaching staff affected.
- Exams Officer will organise rooming in advance of examination windows to ensure sufficient time is available to identify appropriate rooms and plan appropriately.
- Exams Officer agrees & prepares the external/internal exam/assessment timetable/calendar and shares this SLT; Site Management & wider school community in advance of the exam seasons.
- In the event of an emergency; SLT in conjunction with the Exams Officer will review the free room calendar. Consider all factors involved and move to an appropriate alternative venue.
- If all students are in the exam at any one time; then the rooms used by that Year group in that period should be free and can be booked for exams.
- No free rooms; refer to SLT for guidance.
- In the event of a room not being available at very short notice (or insufficient rooming available) support staff and invigilators will be used to ensure the security of the examination is not compromised whilst alternative rooming is sourced. (candidates will be suitably isolated as required).
- Seek advice from awarding organisations and JCQ Inspection Service, request timetable adjustment if required and operate exams on split timings.
- In the event that the exam rooms are unavailable use other building on the Campus site closing the school to other students if necessary.

Alternative venue details:

- In the event of a whole Campus closure alternative accommodation may be sought at will be arranged at St Marys Catholic Voluntary Academy, Bradford Road, Leeds, LS29 6AE
- Reciprocal accommodation arrangements to be included in the St Mary's exams policy document 23/24.
- Communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or venue.

## 6. Cyber-attack

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

*Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of delivery*

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

- Exams team - Exam entries to be processed in advance of deadlines and a paper copy kept until the end of the exams series
- ICT Services - Backups to be kept and regularly tested of MIS data, on-site and off-site, and airgapped
- ICT Services - Consistent monitoring of enterprise security systems to ensure full functioning and expedited response to alerts

ICT Services – Backup internet connection options and computers to be available for conduct of electronic exams where the normal network is unavailable.

## 7. Failure of IT systems

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

*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*

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

- Exam entries should be made well in advance of the deadline to avoid any issues.
- In the event of an IT failure contact the relevant exam board to explain (they may give an extension, but get a name and/or get it in writing!)
- Check with the Andrew Mathieson IT Network Manager where updates and/or network issues are likely to impact upon work in the exams office.
- Check in advance that IT Network is aware of exam results days to ensure smooth running of downloads & any possible issues that would delay release of results to candidates

## 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

- SLT will implement the schools lockdown policy around school. The Exams Officer communicates with SLT-LM.
- In the event of an evacuation; the Exams Officer/Invigilator will follow JCQ ICE Section 18: Emergencies.
- SLT to assist in maintaining the security of the exam; may allocate a separate area for candidates.
- Exam Officer to ensure Invigilators are aware of the lockdown/emergency policy.
- SLT will advise when the time is appropriate to return to the exam room and resume the exam.
- Exams Officer will notify the exam board of the circumstances. This may take the form an immediate request for guidance and/or submitting special consideration to mitigate those circumstances

## 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

- (Where there is disruption to teaching time and students miss teaching and learning, it remains the responsibility of centres to prepare students, as usual, for examinations. ☒ in the case of modular courses,



centres may advise candidates to sit examinations in an alternative series. (Centres should have plans in place to facilitate alternative methods of learning.)

#### 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*

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

- Exams Office downloads timetable base data from exam board information verified with Heads of Curriculum.
- Exams Office secures exam papers on arrival in school. EO has list of all exams being sat in the exam season with paper reference numbers and dates. Checked jointly by EO & Invigilator and filed securely in chronological order. Any errors or omissions are immediately communicated to the exam board.
- Emergency papers can be requested from the exam boards and downloaded under secure password.
- Exams Office provides detailed accurate timetable information to Candidates in advance of the exam.
- Attendance is checked when Candidates arrive for their exams and any not present are contacted by SLT. In some cases Candidates can be collected from home.
- Centre to liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation.
- Centre to offer candidates an opportunity to sit any exams missed at the next available series.
- Centre to apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidate where they have met the minimum requirements. Candidates are only eligible for special consideration if they have been fully prepared and have covered the whole course but are affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control.

#### 11. Centre may not be able to open as normal during the examination period

(Including in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency)

##### Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

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

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

- Centre to open for exams and exam candidates only if possible.
- SLT to consider staffing of exams; in the absence of the Exams Officer; staff with knowledge of exam rules & regulations together with locally based invigilators can be used at short notice.
- Centre to use alternative venues in agreement with the relevant awarding organisations e.g. share facilities with other centres or use another public building if possible.
- Centre may offer candidates an opportunity to sit any exams missed at the next available series.
- Centre to apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates.
- Alternative venue details: St\_Marys Catholic Voluntary Academy, Bradford Road, Leeds, LS29 6AE

#### 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*

##### Awarding organisations actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Awarding organisations to provide centres with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network. Centres would need to ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions and should have plans in place to facilitate such an action.
- Awarding organisations would provide guidance on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances
- As a last resort, and in close collaboration with centres and regulators, awarding organisations to consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Exams Office ensures accuracy of exam entries in conjunction with the teaching staff, via the schools MIS and pre-entry checking of entries.
- Awarding bodies despatch exam scripts which are checked to packing lists on arrival in school. The Exams Officer will alert the Awarding bodies of any discrepancies.
- In the event that this occurs on the day of the exam the Exams Office will contact the exam board immediately to provide the Centre with electronic access to the exam paper(s) via a secure external network.
- Exam board to fax exam paper(s) to the Centre if electronic transfer is not possible.
- Exams Officer to ensure that copies are received; prepared and stored under secure conditions.

**13. Disruption to transporting completed examination scripts**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

*Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts/assessment evidence*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Centre to ensure secure storage of completed examination papers until collection. All exam scripts must be stored securely in the Exams Office.
- Where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding organisations arrange collections, centres should seek advice from awarding organisations and should not make their own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding body
- For any examinations where centres make their arrangements for transportation, centres should investigate alternative dispatch options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ *Instructions for conducting examinations*.
- Centres to ensure secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection.)

**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

- Notify the Awarding body immediately.
- Awarding bodies to generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the Awarding body.
- where marks cannot be generated by awarding organisations candidates may need to retake affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series.
- Candidates may retake the affected assessment at a subsequent assessment window.
- In the event that the completed examination scripts/assessment evidence does not reach the awarding organisation. Exam board contacts the centre with details of the missing script/assessment. Check exams office record of despatch Parcelforce/Royal Mail for parcel reference. If evidence of posting advise exam board

### 15. 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

- Centre to notify Awarding Bodies.
- Centre to make arrangements to access its results at an alternative site, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation.
- Centre to make arrangements to coordinate access to post results services from an alternative site
- Centre to share facilities with other centres if this is possible, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation .
- Centre to make arrangements to make post results requests at an alternative location
- Centre to contact the relevant awarding organisation if electronic post results requests are not possible).
- Alternative venue details: St\_Marys Catholic Voluntary Academy, Bradford Road, Leeds, LS29 6AE

### 16. Exam paper(s) compromised

#### Criteria for implementation of the plan

*Centre becomes aware that exam papers have been compromised.*

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

- Centre to notify Awarding Body immediately.
- Always ensure that the Exams Secure Office remains locked at all times.
- Always ensure Exams Secure Office cabinets are locked and barred at all times.
- Always secure exam board paper in the Exams Secure Office and ensure that unused exam board paper remains under the control of the exams office at all times.

### 17. Results Day

#### Criteria for implementation of the plan

*Impacts upon Candidate destinations at KS4 & KS5 Results*

*No result received for Candidate*

*Inaccurate headline figures and Candidate results*

*Results are unavailable to Candidates on time*

*Enquiries About Results cannot be submitted*

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

- Check exam papers to attendance lists accurately before despatching to exam boards.
- Ensure accurate copies of all exam attendance list; seating plans and invigilation arrangements are held on record until completion of the JCQ Post Results: EAR process has been completed.
- Exams Officer to check A2C in advance of Results Day. Arrive early on Results Day to commence download of results using the A2C (EDI) download of results.
- Exams Officer to check exam entries; ensuring cash in award codes are entered accurately to avoid errors when downloading result data to SIMS.

- Follow Post Results EAR & Appeals procedures; and ensure Candidates/Parent are aware of the procedures and sign the relevant permissions as soon as possible Post Results.

## 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](#)
- [Cyber crime and cyber security: a guide for education providers](#)
- [DfE Cyber Security Guidance – March 2023](#)

### 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>)

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



## **EQUALITY REVIEW – POLICY IMPACT STATEMENT**

### **Step 1 – Further information**

Policy title	Exam Contingency Plan
Person responsible for carrying out the assessment	Ray Allen Exams Officer
New or previously approved policy?	Previously approved policy
Date of approval / last review (if known)	27/11/2023

### **Step 2 – Further information**

1. Who is responsible for the policy that is being assessed?	Mr R J Allen Exams Data Officer Mr Steve Vasey Director Exams & Assessments Mr Paul Clayton Head Teacher Mrs Kim Ratcliffe Lead SENCO Mrs Oluchi Yusuf SENCO
2. Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy	This plan examines the potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at Guiseley School.
3. Are there associated objectives of the policy? If so, please explain.	The plan outlines actions/procedures to be invoked in the case of disruption it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on our exams process.
4. Who is expected to benefit from this policy?	Senior Leaders; Teaching staff; Exams Officer, candidates/parents/carers. The covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow Senior Leaders to act immediately in the event of an emergency or staff absence.
5. Who was consulted on this policy?	The Joint Council for Qualifications Compliant with JCQ Regulation Sect: 5.3 General Regulations for Approved Centres 2023-24 Relevant Examination Boards: AQA; Pearson Edexcel; OCR and WJEC. The Exams Office <a href="http://www.theexamsoffice.org">www.theexamsoffice.org</a> Guiseley School Senior Leaders
6. How has the policy been explained to those who would be directly or indirectly affected by it?	The Exam Contingency Plan is available to view on the Guiseley School website. A hard copy is available from the Exams Office.
7. What outcome(s) are meant to be achieved from this policy?	Centre staff and candidates/parents/carers understand the impacts of disruptions to the examination process and the actions that can be taken to mitigate the impact of those disruptions.
8. What factors could contribute to the outcome(s)?	A clear understanding by Heads of Department & Teaching Staff; candidates/parents/carers of the types of disruptions that could occur and how to react to lessen the impact of the same.
9. What factors could detract from the outcome(s)?	Failure to read, understand; observe and the implement procedures.

**Step 3 – Assess the impact on different groups of people**

Equality Target Group	Positive impact	Negative impact	Neutral impact	Reasons / comments
Men	Yes			
Women	Yes			
People from black and minority ethnic communities	Yes			
Disabled people	Yes			
Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual People	Yes			
Transgender people	Yes			
Disadvantaged / Pupil Premium Students	Yes			
Older people (50+)	Yes			
Younger people (17 – 25)	Yes			
Faith or belief groups	Yes			

**Step 4 – Promoting equality**

10. Please give a brief description of how this policy promotes equality.	The promotion of SMSC includes equality of rights, equality of opportunity and valuing race equality.
11. If there is no evidence that the policy promotes equality, what changes, if any, could be made to achieve this?	n/a
12. If there is a negative impact on any equality target groups, can this impact be legally and objectively justified? (If no, then a full Equality Impact Assessment should be completed).	n/a

**Step 5 – Recommendation**

13. Is a full Equality Impact Assessment required?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	<del>Yes</del> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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