

Exam Contingency Plan

Highworth Warneford School



Reviewed by:	Exams Officer	Approved by	Headteacher
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Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the management and administration of the exam process at Highworth Warneford 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 *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*.

This plan also confirms Highworth Warneford School is compliant with the JCQ regulation (section 5.3, *General Regulations for Approved Centres*) that the centre *has in place a written examination contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to act immediately in the event of an emergency or staff absence*.

Possible causes of potential disruption to the exam process

Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (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 and trained
- *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*
 - 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 or candidates' work not stored under secure conditions
 - internal assessment marks and samples of 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 e.g. very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration
- candidates' scripts not dispatched as required 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:

- The Exams Officer will complete key tasks in a timely manner and communicate with the Exams Assistant and Deputy Head (curriculum) regarding progress on a regular basis.
- Planning and entry information for each exam season will be stored in specific exam series files.
- The Exams Assistant, Office Manager and Deputy Head (curriculum) will assist in the management and administration of exams, as appropriate, in the absence of the Exams Officer.
- All revised JCQ regulations will be circulated to SLT on receipt.

SENCo extended absence at key points in 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
 - 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
 - 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:

- The SENCo will work with Exams Officer to submit new applications for access arrangements
- The Exams Officer will update the Access Arrangement master list and ensure it is distributed to the SENCo, the exams information file on the staff drive and on the staff room noticeboard.
- The SENCo will update the Exams Officer with the progress of assessments for new access arrangement applications at regular intervals.
- Applications for access arrangements will be made in advance of external deadlines.
- The SENCo's deputies will arrange exam room support.

- A member of the school leadership team will meet the JCQ inspector in the absence of the SENCo.
- The school will liaise with neighbouring schools and/or buy in the services of a specialist assessor as and when necessary.
- Staff training for access arrangements will take place at same time as invigilator training on an annual basis. The SENCo and/or Exams Officer will provide ad hoc training as required.

Teaching staff extended absence at key points in 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*
- *Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet submission deadlines*
- *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*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Heads of Department will work with their deputies to compile and submit exam entry information. The deputy Head of Department will submit entry details in the Head of Department's absence.
- The Exams Officer will work closely with Heads of Department to ensure that all entry information is collected in advance of entry deadlines (exam entries for the following academic year will be collected at the end of the summer term).

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:

- Invigilator vacancies will be advertised widely using local publications and the internet.
- The availability and number of invigilators will be reviewed by the Exams Officer and the Assistant Business Manager at the start of each academic year.
- New invigilators will be recruited in March/April, when required, and receive annual training.

- Where possible, an extra invigilator will be timetabled for each exam session.
- In the case of invigilator absence (30 minutes before the exam commences), the Exams Officer will liaise with the Cover Supervisor to arrange immediate cover from trained staff in school and contact local invigilators to check their immediate availability.

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:

- The Exams Officer will use the School Booking System to book ICT Rooms to provide or identify empty classrooms.
- The Exams Officer will identify classes which can be collapsed (due to students sitting an examination) thus providing an empty classroom.
- If the hall and/or Gym become unavailable, other classrooms or the Sports Hall will be used for exams.
- Alternative venues will be sought, following consultation with awarding bodies, when no rooms available in school. Highworth Recreation Centre will be used if no rooms are available in school.
- Candidates who will be facing examinations shortly will be prioritised.
- The centre will communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and it will outline the plans to address this.

Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- MIS system failure at final entry deadline
- MIS system failure during exams preparation
- MIS system failure at results release time

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- The ICT supervisor will be contacted immediately and advice will be sought.
- The MIS provider will be contacted immediately and advice will be sought.
- The awarding organisations will be contacted immediately and advice will be sought regarding entry submission of result retrieval using the exam board secure sites.

Emergency evacuation of the exam room

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- 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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The centre will communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue and follow their instructions.
- The centre will identify whether the exam can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding body.
- The centre will communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issue.
- The centre will advise students, where appropriate, to sit the exam at the next available series
- Special consideration will be applied for if candidates have met the minimum requirements.

Disruption of teaching time – 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:

- The centre will communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and outline the plans to address this, describing alternative methods of learning, alternative venues or both.
- Extra teaching and revision sessions may be timetabled when normal teaching resumes.
- Special consideration will be applied for, where applicable.
- Candidates who will be facing examinations shortly will be prioritised.
- Candidates, where appropriate, will be advised to sit examinations in the next available series.
- A JCQ Alternative Site Form will be completed and submitted, as required.

Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Candidates are unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- The centre will communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue.
- The centre will communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issue.

- The centre will liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with the relevant awarding organisations.
- The centre will offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series, where appropriate.
- Special consideration will be applied for if candidates have met the minimum requirements.

Centre unable to open as normal during the exams period (including in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- The centre will inform each awarding organisation with which examinations are due to be taken as soon as is possible.
- The centre will open for examinations and examination candidates only, if possible.
- The centre will use Highworth Recreation Centre as an alternative venue following liaison with the relevant awarding organisations.
- Where candidates have met the minimum requirements, the centre will apply to awarding organisations for special consideration.
- The head of centre will be responsible for taking advice, or following instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether the centre is able to open.

Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Disruption to the distribution of examination papers to the centre in advance of examinations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- The centre will communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery of papers.

Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- The centre will communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to resolve the issue.
- The centre will liaise with Parcelforce Worldwide, where applicable.
- Secure storage of completed examination scripts, in line with JCQ guidance, will be ensured by the centre until collection is made.
- The centre will ensure that scripts are delivered to awarding organisations with the minimum of delay.

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- The head of centre will communicate this immediately to the relevant awarding organisation(s) and subsequently to students and their parents or carers.
- Candidate marks will be generated (if possible) for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement, as defined by the awarding organisations in consultation with the regulators.
- Where necessary and possible, candidates will retake the assessment that has been affected at a subsequent assessment window.

Centre unable to distribute results as normal (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:

- The centres will contact awarding organisations about alternative options.
- The centre will, if possible, make arrangements to access results at an alternative site or share facilities with other schools and colleges.
- The centre will endeavour to ensure that candidates receive their results in a timely way.

Reviewed annually by the Exams Officer and the Headteacher

Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

Ofqual

What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted

Contingency planning

You should prepare for possible disruption to exams and other assessments as part of your emergency planning and make sure your staff are aware of these plans.

When drafting contingency plans, you should consider the following guidance...

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
-

Steps you should take

- **Exam planning**

Review contingency plans well in advance of each exam or assessment series. Consider how, if the contingency plan is invoked, you will comply with the awarding organisation's requirements.

- **In the event of disruption**

- Contact the relevant awarding organisation and follow its instructions.
- Take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether your centre is able to open.
- Identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation, ensuring the secure transportation of questions papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue.
- Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned.
- In the event of an evacuation during an examination please refer to JCQ's '**Centre emergency evacuation procedure**'.
- Communicate with parents, carers and students any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.
- Communicate with any external assessors or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable.

- **After the exam**

- Consider whether any students' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration.
- Advise students, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date.
- Ensure that scripts are stored under secure conditions.
- Return scripts to awarding organisations in line with their instructions. Never make alternative arrangements for the transportation of completed exam scripts, unless told to do so by the awarding organisation.

Steps the awarding organisation should take

- **Exam planning**

- Establish and maintain, and at all times comply with, an up-to-date, written contingency plan.

- Ensure that the arrangements in place with centres and other third parties enable them to deliver and award qualifications in accordance with their conditions of recognition.
- **In the event of disruption**
 - Take all reasonable steps to mitigate any adverse effect, in relation to their qualifications, arising from any disruption.
 - Provide effective guidance to any of their centres delivering qualifications.
 - Ensure that where an assessment must be completed under specified conditions, students complete the assessment under those conditions (other than where any reasonable adjustments or special considerations require alternative conditions).
 - Promptly notify the relevant regulators about any event which could have an adverse effect on students, standards or public confidence.
 - Coordinate its communications with the relevant regulators where the disruption has an impact on multiple centres or a wide range of learners.
- **After the exam**

Consider any requests for special consideration for affected students. For example, those who may have lost their internally assessed work or whose performance in assessments or exams could have been affected by the disruption.

If any students miss an exam or are disadvantaged by the disruption

If some of the students have been adversely affected by the disruption, you should ask the awarding organisation about applying for special consideration.

Decisions about special consideration, when it is or is not appropriate, is for each awarding organisation to make. Their decisions might be different for different qualifications and for different subjects.

See also:

- [JCQ's guidance on special considerations](#)
- [FAB's guidance on special considerations](#)

Wider communications

The regulators, [Ofqual](#) in England, [Qualifications Wales](#) in Wales and [CCEA](#) in Northern Ireland, will share timely and accurate information, as required, with awarding organisations, government departments and other stakeholders.

The [Department for Education](#) in England, the [Department of Education](#) in Northern Ireland and the [Welsh Government](#) will inform the relevant government ministers as soon as it becomes apparent that there will be significant local or national disruption; and ensure that they are kept updated until the matter is resolved.

Awarding organisations will alert the [Universities and Colleges Admissions Service](#) (UCAS) and the [Central Applications Office](#) (CAO) about any impact of the disruption on their deadlines and liaise regarding student progression to further and higher education.

Awarding organisations will alert relevant professional bodies or employer groups if the impact of disruption particularly affects them.

Widespread national disruption

In the event of widespread sustained national disruption, the 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 exam timetables

[Ofqual guidance extract taken directly from the Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland - What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted, (updated 18 January 2023)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-if-exams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted>

JCQ

15.1 The qualification regulators, JCQ 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/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-if-exams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted>

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

15.3 Centres should prepare plans for any disruption to examinations as part of their general emergency planning. It is important to ensure that relevant centre staff are familiar with the plan. Consideration should be given as to how these arrangements will be communicated to candidates, parents and staff should disruption to examinations occur.

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

15.5 The awarding bodies have designated **Wednesday 28 June 2023** as the 'contingency day' for examinations. The **afternoons of Thursday 8 June and Thursday 15 June** have been designated as 'contingency afternoons' for examinations. This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document *Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland*. The designation of a 'contingency day' within the common examination timetable is in the event of national or local disruption to examinations. It is part of the awarding bodies' standard contingency planning for examinations.

Centres must therefore remind candidates that they must remain available until 28th June 2023 should an awarding body need to invoke its contingency plan.

[JCQ guidance taken directly from JCQ *Instructions for Conducting Examinations*

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>, section

15. Contingency planning]

General Regulations for Approved Centres <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations>

Guidance on *Alternative Site* arrangements and *Transferred Candidate* arrangements

Accessed through secure login to the Centre Admin Portal (CAP) or through the JCQ training site
<http://jqc.training.jcq.org.uk/CAP/Home/Training>

Instructions for Conducting Examinations <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>

A guide to the special consideration process <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance>

GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response: Severe weather; Exam disruption

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings>

Teaching time lost due to severe weather conditions

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-time-lost-due-to-severe-weather-conditions>

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service>

Statutory guidance on school closures <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools>

Wales

School closures – opening schools in extreme bad weather

<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/schoolclosuresfaq/?lang=en>

Northern Ireland

Exceptional closure days <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days>

Checklist for Principals when considering Opening or Closure of School <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools>

School closures <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/school-closures>

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