



Highworth Warneford School

Contingency Plan



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 exam process.

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 Highworth Warneford 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 2023).

This plan details how Highworth Warneford School complies with the JCQ's General Regulations for Approved Centres (section 5.3, Centre management) by having 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 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. (GR 5.3)

Possible causes of potential disruption to the exam process

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 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 Head of Centre 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 Head of Centre 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 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
 - 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 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*
- *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 – centre remains open

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Candidates are unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as may not be able to take examinations- 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

DfE

Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges

[Cyber Security Standards in schools and colleges](#)

[Cyber crime and cyber security: a guide for education providers](#)

[DfE Cyber Security Guidance - March 2023](#)

Ofqual

Ofqual guidance extract taken directly from the Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland - What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted (last updated 5 October 2023)

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

JCQ guidance taken directly from [Instructions for conducting examinations 2023-2024 section 15, Contingency planning "](#)

Links to other JCQ documentation

[JCQ Joint Contingency Plan](#)

[JCQ Preparing for disruption to examinations](#)

[JCQ Notice to Centres - exam contingency plan](#)

[General Regulations for Approved Centres](#)

[Guidance notes on alternative site arrangements](#) [Guidance notes for transferred candidates](#)

[Instructions for conducting examinations](#)

[A guide to the special consideration process](#)

[Guidance for centres on cyber security \(Effective from November 2023\)](#)

[Information for centres affected by RAAC – the delivery of non-examination assessments and the special consideration process](#)

GOV.UK

[Emergency planning and response](#): Exam and assessment disruption

[Dispatch of exam scripts guide](#): Ensuring the service runs smoothly; Contingency planning

National Cyber Security Centre

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:

- Further ransomware attacks on UK education by cyber criminals
- Ransomware advice and guidance for your IT teams to implement
- Offline backups in an online world
- Backing up your data
- Practical resources to help schools improve their cyber security
- Building Resilience: Ransomware, the risk to schools and ways to prevent it
- School staff offered training to help shore up cyber defences