



# The BRIT School

## Examinations Contingency Plan

2025-2026

### KEY STAFF INVOLVED IN CONTINGENCY PLAN

Role	Name(s)
Head of Centre	Stuart Worden
Senior Leaders	Louise Cooper Katie Findlater
Exams Officer	Charlotte Byrne
SENCo	Lakshmy Rajah

#### **Purpose of the Plan:**

This plan examines potential risks that could cause disruption to the exam and assessment process at The BRIT School. By outlining actions/procedures to be

invoked in case of disruption, it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on our processes.

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by the Ofqual Exam system contingency plan, '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 and the JCQ document Preparing for disruption to exams.

This plan details The BRIT School's compliance with the JCQ's General Regulations for Approved Centres (GR 5.3) by having in place for inspection that must be reviewed and updated annually, a written contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination/assessment administration and delivery.

## **Contingency arrangements**

In accordance with the regulations (GR 3.17-19), The BRIT School must have an up to date written contingency plan, covering all aspects of exam/assessment admin and delivery. Senior leaders must have robust contingency arrangements in place that will minimise the risk to exam/assessment admin and delivery and any adverse impact on candidates. The plan must cover the following scenarios:

- the head of centre / relevant senior leader with oversight of exam and assessment admin / SENCo / exams officer / any other key staff essential to the exam process, being absent at a critical stage of the exam cycle
- the potential impact of other events (eg. flooding) which could lead to all or parts of the centre becoming unavailable
- potential issues with the centre's IT systems

As part of the contingency plan the centre must identify an alternative site or alternative sites which can be used if examinations cannot be conducted at the registered address. Larger centres may require more than one potential alternative site or different sites for different year groups.

The BRIT School must have at least one senior member of staff who is available to manage emergency requests from awarding bodies that are results related during the summer holidays. However, a number of contacts can be provided to reduce the risk of this falling on one individual throughout the summer holidays.

The BRIT School must ensure where candidates' work is produced electronically it is backed-up and should consider the contingency of candidates' work being backed-up on two separate devices, including one off-site back-up via the Cloud. Appropriate security arrangements must be implemented which protect candidates' work in the event of IT system corruption and cyber-attacks.

## **National Centre Number Register and other information requirements**

In accordance with the regulations (GR 5.3), the head of centre will ensure that The BRIT School completes the National Centre Number Register annual update by the end of October every year (even if there are no changes to centre details) which includes providing senior designated contact details (this might include a personal mobile number and/or email address). These must be the contact details of someone who can be reached in an emergency if the centre is closed over the summer and who can mobilise resources to respond to the issue.

## **Head of centre/senior leader(s) with oversight of examination and assessment administration absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle**

Where the head of centre/senior leader may be absent at a critical stage of the exam cycle, main duties and responsibilities will be escalated in accordance with the centre's written process. The Exams Officer will assume day to day responsibility for the management and delivery of the exam cycle, with support from the Data Officer where necessary. Oversight and decision making will be delegated to a designated member of the Senior Leadership Team.

## **Possible cause of Disruption to the exam process**

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

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

#### **Planning**

- annual exams plan not produced identifying essential key tasks, key dates and deadlines
- sufficient invigilators not recruited

#### **Entries**

- awarding bodies not being informed of estimated entries which prompts release of early information required by teaching staff
- candidates not being entered with awarding bodies for external exams/assessment
- 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, 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 exam conditions
- required reports/requests not submitted to awarding bodies during exam/assessment periods (eg. very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration)
- candidates' scripts not dispatched as required to awarding bodies

#### **Results and post-results**

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

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

If absence is extended, the Head of Centre must source a temporary replacement as per normal procedures. If the Exams Officer is absent for a short duration, during the key dates the following will be implemented:

### **Planning**

- The annual data collection exercise will be completed by the quality nominee, or by the relevant member of SLT.
- Annual exams plan will be produced and published in the exams calendar by the Data and Exams team.
- The relevant members of SLT/Exams Officer's line manager recruit invigilators.

### **Entries and Pre-exams**

The Data and Exams team will carry out the following tasks:

- Be prepared to inform awarding bodies of estimated entries, enter candidates for external assessments, and be aware of entry deadlines.
- Train invigilators and provide updates on any changes to the Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE).
- Prepare exam timetables, allocate rooms, and create invigilation schedules.
- Brief candidates on exam timetables and Information for Candidates.
- Store confidential exam/assessment materials and candidates' work under the required secure conditions.
- Submit internal assessment marks and required samples of candidates' work to awarding bodies/external moderators.

### **Exam time**

- The Head of centre will be responsible to ensure exams / assessments are taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding bodies.
- Required reports / requests will be submitted to awarding bodies by the Data and Exams team, overseen by the relevant member of SLT.
- Candidates' scripts will be dispatched to awarding bodies by deadlines, and stored correctly in the safe by the Data and Exams team.

### **Results and post-results**

- The Data and Exams team (overseen by the relevant member of SLT) will access exam results and facilitate the post-results services.

## **2. SENCo extended absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle**

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**

If absence is extended, the Head of Centre must source a temporary replacement as per normal procedures. If the SENCo is absent for a short duration, during the key dates the following will be implemented:

#### **Planning**

- Deputy SENCo and AEN recruited assessors (confirm recruited assessors have qualification required in JCQ Access Arrangement Regulations) to complete all planning for candidates testing, identification of candidates and collation of evidence of need and normal way of working.

#### **Pre-exams**

- Deputy SENCo supported by AEN Administrator to apply for approval for access arrangements from the awarding body.
- SLT AEN lead to ensure Deputy SENCo and AEN administrator inform the Data and Exam team by updating the MIS. Centre-delegated arrangements put in place must be overseen by the Head of Centre.
- SLT AEN lead to ensure Deputy SENCo and AEN administrator inform the Data and Exam team of modified paper requirements.
- Deputy SENCo supported by AEN Administrator, to ensure facilitators providing support to candidates are allocated and trained. The Data and Exams team should be informed who will support each listed Access Arrangement student.

#### **Exam time**

- Deputy SENCo supported by AEN Administrator to ensure candidate support and that exam rooms for Access Arrangement candidates are in order.

### **3. Teaching staff (or other key staff essential to the examination process) extended absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle**

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 (including controlled assessments and coursework) 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 deadline,

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

If absence is extended, the Head of Centre must source a temporary replacement as per normal procedures. If teaching staff is absent for a short duration, during the key dates the following will be implemented:

- The Exams Officer can use entry reports to view numbers, so that they still have estimated entry information.
- If the Head of Department isn't available, SLT leads must confirm final entries with the deputy director/deputy Head of Department. If teachers are not available, the Head of Department must make the decision for class entry and tiers entry.
- If the Head of Department isn't available, SLT leads must confirm the schedule of non-examination assessments with the deputy director/deputy head of department. If teachers are not available, the Head of Department must ensure that non-examination assessment tasks are completed as scheduled.
- If the Head of Department isn't available, SLT leads ensure candidates are aware of centre-assessed marks with the deputy director/deputy head of department. If teachers are not available, the Head of Department must ensure that candidates are informed of centre assessed marks before marks are submitted to the awarding body.
- If the Head of Department isn't available, SLT leads must check in with the deputy director/deputy head of department. If teachers are not available, the Head of Department must ensure internal assessment marks and candidates' work is provided to meet awarding body submission deadlines.

### **4. Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence.**

Possible issues:

- 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:**

- If not enough invigilators are recruited the Exams Officer can book emergency agency staff at higher cost.
- Support staff (in areas that can accommodate at the time) will have training to fill in on exam days if required.
- A member of the Data and Exams team can fill in if required.

### **5. Exam rooms- Lack of appropriate rooms or main venues.**

Possible issues:

- Exams officer unable to identify sufficient / appropriate rooms during exams timetable planning.
- Insufficient rooms available on peak exam days.
- Exam venues unavailable due to an unexpected incident at time of exam.

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

- The Exams Officer will inform the Line Manager if there are any issues with room availability or suitability during exam timetable planning. To accommodate exams, classes may be rescheduled or AEN rooms and any unused classrooms can be utilised. Available spaces include three theatres, a hall, a gym, and, if necessary, "the Hut." The Data and Exams team will support with room bookings as needed to ensure smooth scheduling.
- If all on-site venues in the three buildings are compromised (due to fire, flooding, or security issues), The Crescent Primary School has agreed to provide access to their school hall. In case of relocation, secure transportation of assessment materials to the alternative venue will be ensured to maintain the integrity of the exam process. After the exam, we will assess whether any candidates were majorly impacted and, if so, apply for special consideration.
- Alternatively, staggered exams may be conducted, with students kept in exam conditions as necessary.

### **6. Cyber-attack**

Where any incidents might compromise any aspect of assessment delivery, such as a cyber-attack

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

Ensure there are procedures in place to maintain the security of user accounts by:

- a) ensuring that all members of centre staff who access awarding bodies' online systems undertake annual cyber security training. The training must include:
  - the importance of creating strong, unique passwords for all accounts.
  - keeping all account details strictly confidential.
  - the critical role of Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) in protecting against unauthorised access.

- how to properly set up and use MFA for centre and awarding bodies' systems.
- an awareness of all types of social engineering/phishing attempts.
- the importance of staff quickly reporting any suspicious activity, events, incidents and encouraging a safe and supportive reporting culture.

Certificates of completed staff cyber training must be downloaded and held on file for inspection. The NCSC training resource provides a certificate of completion of cyber training.

- b) developing and maintaining a comprehensive cyber security policy for the centre. The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) provides resources to assist centres in creating such policies.
- c) implementing and enforcing robust security measures, including:
  - mandatory MFA for all accounts and systems containing exam-related information, including those that interface between awarding body and centre systems, to enhance security and protect sensitive data.
  - regularly reviewing and updating security settings to align with current best practices.
- d) updating any passwords that may have been exposed
- e) setting up secure account recovery options
- f) reviewing and managing connected applications
- g) monitoring accounts and regularly reviewing account access, including removing access when no longer required
- h) ensuring authorised members of staff securely access awarding bodies' online systems in line with awarding body regulations regarding cyber security and the JCQ document Guidance for centres on cyber security. Authorised staff will have access, where necessary, to a device which complies with awarding bodies' MFA requirements.
- i) reporting any actual or suspected compromise of an awarding body's online systems immediately to the relevant awarding body

## 7. Failure of IT systems

- IT system corruption affecting candidates' work
- MIS system failure at final entry deadline
- MIS system failure during exams preparation
- Power outage immediately prior to or during an on-screen test
- MIS system failure at results release time

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

- MIS system failure at the final entry deadline will be mitigated in two ways. Student entry lists for each subject are kept in a secure and separate google drive as a backup. Entries will be made a minimum of a week before the external deadline for registrations / entry deadlines. The Exams Officer can make entries on the awarding body system if required.
- In the case of MIS system failure during exams prep, the data and exams team can use excel to manually plan the seating, rooming and create packs, using the hard copies of student entries.
- In the case of MIS system failure at results release time, results will be printed and collated from awarding body portals.

- Ensure where candidates' work is produced electronically that it is backed-up and should consider the contingency of candidates' work being backed-up on two separate devices, including one off-site back-up via the Cloud. Implement appropriate security arrangements which protect candidates' work in the event of IT system corruption and cyber-attacks.

## **8. Emergency evacuation of the exam room or centre lock down**

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:**

- All invigilators for each exam room have an emergency evacuation plan in their exam pack. They have received training to follow the evacuation plan and prioritise student safety.
- In the event of a lockdown, the Data and Exams team will proceed to the exam rooms and follow the school's lockdown procedure. Alongside invigilators and students, they will ensure doors are locked, lights are turned off, and everyone remains silent and out of sight. Communication with other staff will be maintained discreetly via silent text messages.
- All issues will be reported to the relevant awarding body, and special consideration will be applied for for all students who were affected.

## **9. Disruption of teaching time in the weeks before an exam – centre closed for an extended period.**

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:**

- Staff have been trained in Google Classroom, allowing them to deliver online lessons and assignments if on-site learning is disrupted or students are unable to attend. In the event of a centre closure, teaching and learning can continue remotely, with teachers assigning and marking work through Google Classroom for sustained periods of online study.
- The centre will maintain contact with students who have low attendance due to a known long-term absence from school through the pastoral team.
- If the school is closed for an extended period, the Senior Leadership Team, Heads of Departments, and teachers will work together to adapt learning to meet the needs of students studying from home. Senior leaders must be informed of all students engaged in off-site learning during this time to effectively monitor their progress.
- In the case of modular courses, centres may advise candidates to sit examinations in an alternative series.

## **10. Candidates may not be able to take exams – centre remains open**

Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis.

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

- The Head of Centre must ensure there is an annual review of the schools contingency requirements and plan accordingly.
- The three buildings on-site are each equipped with halls that can be utilised for exams. Additionally, there are contingency arrangements with The Crescent Primary School for use in case of an emergency closure of The BRIT School on exam or results day. In such an event, we can request approval from the exam boards to use the alternative site and stagger exam start times as needed, ensuring that students remain in exam conditions between the official start and end times of their exams. The Exams Officer will inform the awarding body and apply for any necessary special considerations.
- Centre must ensure that any candidate suffering from, or suspected of suffering from, an infectious or contagious disease must take the examination in a separate room in which all instructions for conducting examinations can be applied. Centres must keep the candidate's script separate from other scripts. Centres must not dispatch the script until advice has been sought from the awarding body.
- If they are too unwell to sit they would be awarded special consideration for the exam, which will cover the exam missed, but the student must meet minimum requirements of 40% of all qualification units completed to be awarded a grade and certificate. If the candidate cannot achieve this they should enter in the next available exam series where possible.

## **11. Centre may not be able to open for exams**

Centre may not be able to open as normal for scheduled exams (Including in the event of the centre being unavailable for exams due to an unforeseen emergency).

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

- The three buildings on-site are each equipped with halls that can be utilised for exams. Additionally, there are contingency arrangements with The Crescent Primary School for use in case of an emergency closure of The BRIT School on exam or results day. In such an event, we can request approval from the exam boards to use the alternative site and stagger exam start times as needed, ensuring that students remain in exam conditions between the official start and end times of their exams. The Exams Officer will inform the awarding body and apply for any necessary special considerations.

## **12. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers**

Disruption to the distribution of exam papers to the centre in advance of exams.

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

- Awarding bodies to provide centres with electronic access to exam papers via a secure external network. Centres would need to ensure that copies are printed and stored under secure conditions and should have plans in place to

facilitate such an action. To ensure paper security procedures are followed, the Exams Officer (or if needed, the Data and Exams team) will ensure papers are sealed with the exam time and date on, and secured in the safe as per JCQ regulations.

- The Data and Exams team will verify all papers against the expected exam paper list, checking the entry numbers for each subject.
- 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 bodies will consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date. This will be communicated with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) if any changes to the exam / assessment timetable or to the venue, were made.

### **13. Delay in collection arrangements for completed examination scripts**

Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed exam scripts/assessment evidence.

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

- Where examinations are part of the 'yellow label' service or where awarding organisations arrange collections, centres should seek advice from awarding bodies and should not make their own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding organisation. The Data and Exams team will contact awarding bodies for instructions to action.
- The Data and Exams team are to ensure secure storage of completed exam papers until collection is possible.
- "Centres not involved in the secure despatch of exam scripts service: a) must obtain proof of postage/despatch for each packet of scripts, which must be retained on the centre's files until the results are published, in case of loss or damage. (Proof of postage will provide evidence that the candidates' scripts have left the centre. This is taken to indicate that the scripts were written at the appointed time and that, should the scripts not be received by the awarding body/examiner, then special consideration may be possible.) b) Must use a method of despatch which is reliable and ensures prompt delivery."

### **14. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked**

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

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

- Papers should be sent every day for the exam series. If the afternoon exam ends too late for papers to be sent that day, they must be secured in the safe overnight by the Data and Exams team, and sent the next day. No papers should be left at reception overnight.

- A senior member of staff, or a member of the Exams office, must be available until such time that all afternoon examinations have been completed and examination scripts have been despatched or placed in the centre's secure storage facility for despatch the next working day.
- Awarding bodies can generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement, as defined by the awarding body (if enough of the subject units have been completed).
- Where marks cannot be generated by awarding organisations candidates may need to retake affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series.

## 15. Centre unable to distribute results as normal / post results services

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

- The Head of Centre and the Senior Leadership team must ensure results are provided on national results day in agreement with the relevant JCQ regulations and awarding body's requirements.
- The centre must make arrangements to access student results via awarding body portals, and print results securely.
- Results can be sent electronically via the student app if the Head of IT support is able to facilitate this. (The Head of centre must contact the relevant awarding bodies, for instruction if electronic distribution or results and post results requests are not possible.)
- Alternatively allowing collection of paper copies of results, at an alternative site if required. The centre can use the Crescent primary school, as per the centre contingency plan.
- If The BRIT School is to share facilities with other centres for results distribution and post results services this must be in agreement with the relevant awarding bodies and local education authorities must be informed as soon as possible by Head of centre and STL leads.

## 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](#)

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

This document was updated in October 2023 to include Ofqual's final decisions on long-term resilience arrangements, and the Department for Education (DfE)'s guidance for education settings with confirmed reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC),

In addition to this guidance, you will need to be aware of your specific responsibilities for local and national school preparations and contingencies. You should also follow advice from relevant public health bodies.

### **Contingency planning**

Awarding organisations are required to establish, maintain and comply with an up-to-date detailed written contingency plan, to mitigate any incident they have identified may occur. This includes having communication plans for external parties ([Ofqual General Condition of Recognition A6](#)). Schools and colleges should also be prepared for possible disruption to exams and assessments and make sure staff are aware of these plans.

### **Disruption to assessments or exams**

In the absence of any instruction from the relevant awarding organisation, you should make sure that any exam or timetabled assessment takes place if it is possible to hold it. This may mean relocating to alternative premises. You should discuss alternative arrangements with your awarding organisation if:

- the exam or assessment cannot take place
- a student misses an exam or loses their assessment due to an emergency, or other event, outside of the student's control

You may also wish to see the [JCQ's notice to centres on exam contingency plans](#) and [JCQ's notice on preparing for disruption to examinations](#) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland for qualifications within its scope.

### **Steps you should take**

#### **Exam planning**

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

Schools, colleges and other exam centres must speak to the relevant awarding organisations as soon as possible if they are expecting any disruption that might affect the sitting of exams and assessments.

#### **In the event of disruption**

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

### **After the exam**

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

### **Steps the awarding organisation should take**

#### **Exam planning**

1. Establish and maintain, and at all times comply with, an up-to-date, written contingency plan.
2. Ensure that the arrangements in place with centres and other third parties enable them to deliver and award qualifications in accordance with their conditions of recognition.

#### **In the event of disruption**

1. Take all reasonable steps to mitigate any adverse effect, in relation to their qualifications, arising from any disruption.
2. Provide effective guidance to any of their centres delivering qualifications.
3. Ensure that where an assessment must be completed under specified conditions, students are able to complete the assessment under those conditions (other than where any reasonable adjustments or special considerations require alternative conditions).
4. Promptly notify the relevant regulators about any event which could have an adverse effect on students, standards or public confidence.
5. Coordinate its communications with the relevant regulators where the disruption has an impact on multiple centres or a wide range of learners.

### **After the exam**

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

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

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

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

See also [JCQ's guidance on special consideration](#)

#### **Wider communications**

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

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

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

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

### **Widespread national disruption to the taking of examinations or assessments**

As education is devolved, in the event of any widespread sustained national disruption to examinations or assessments, national government departments will communicate with regulators, awarding organisations and centres prior to a public announcement. Regulators will provide advice to government departments on implications for examinations and assessments, including exam timetables.

In September 2023, Ofqual and the DfE published [joint consultation decisions on long-term resilience arrangements](#). As in 2023, Ofqual has provided [guidance on collecting evidence of student performance to ensure resilience in the qualifications system](#) for students entering GCSEs, AS and A levels, the Advanced Extension Award and Project qualifications. For VTQs and other qualifications used alongside or instead of GCSEs, AS and A levels, awarding organisations will provide guidance where needed and will contact schools and colleges with more information.

In December 2022, Qualifications Wales published [guidance for contingency assessment arrangements](#) for GCSEs, AS and A levels and Skills Challenge Certificates in the event that a national decision is made to cancel exams. This guidance is still relevant for the current academic year.

The DfE has updated its guidance on [handling strike action in schools](#) in England in light of the industrial action in 2023. The guidance recommends schools should prioritise the running of examinations and assessments on any strike days, and should review their contingency plans to make this happen. Schools, colleges and other exam centres must speak to the relevant awarding organisations if they are expecting any disruption that might affect the sitting of exams and assessments.

The DfE has also issued [guidance for education settings with confirmed reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete \(RAAC\)](#) in their buildings. It includes the need for contingencies for possible disruption to examinations and links to the existing emergency planning guidance.

We will update this page as necessary, with any further relevant links, should national disruption occur.

### **General contingency guidance**

- [emergency planning and response for education, childcare and children's social care settings](#) from the DfE in England
- [handling strike action in schools](#) from the DfE in England
- [school organisation: local-authority-maintained schools](#) from the DfE in England
- [reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete: guidance for education settings with confirmed RAAC](#) from the DfE in England
- [exceptional closure days: Northern Ireland](#) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- [checklist - exceptional closure of schools](#) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- [school terms and school closures](#) from NI Direct
- [opening schools, childcare and play settings in extreme bad weather and extreme hot weather](#) - guidance for schools from the Welsh Government
- [emergency planning and response guidance for education and childcare settings](#)- guidance for schools and education settings from the Welsh Government
- [protective security and preparedness for education settings](#) from the DfE
- [police guidance](#) from National Counter Terrorism Security Office and partners on preparing for threats

- [cyber security guidance for schools and colleges](#) from the National Cyber Security Centre

**Ofqual** (Ofqual guidance extract above taken directly from the Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland - **What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted** (last updated 7 May 2024) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan->

## 15. CONTINGENCY PLANNING

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

15.5 The awarding bodies will designate 'contingency sessions' for examinations, summer 2026. This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document [Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland](#).

15.6 The designation of 'contingency sessions' within the common examination timetable is for use in the event of national or significant local disruption to examinations. It is part of the awarding bodies' standard contingency planning for examinations.

15.7 In the event of national disruption to a day of examinations in summer 2026, 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.

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

- 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 exams [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/)
- 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; Revised July 2025) [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/)
- 5 tips to get exam ready and stay cyber safe! [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/blogs/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/blogs/)

## 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: 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)

## National Cyber Security Centre

- Cyber Security for Schools [www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/education-skills/cyber-security-schools](http://www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/education-skills/cyber-security-schools)
- Cyber security training for school staff [www.ncsc.gov.uk/information/cyber-security-training-schools](http://www.ncsc.gov.uk/information/cyber-security-training-schools)

## Appendix 1

### **Procedure for Emergency Evacuation of Exam Rooms**

#### **In the event of an emergency, such as a fire or bomb scare, take the following actions:**

- The exam should be stopped immediately and the invigilator should note the time of the interruption on the white board and the Invigilation incident log.

- The invigilator / Examinations Officer should be responsible for the evacuation of people from the exam room, as per the centre evacuation procedures/instructions.
- Candidates, readers, scribes and invigilators should leave in silence. Students should be reminded that they are still under Examination Conditions, and must not talk to each other or anyone else.
- Invigilators should collect the register before leaving the room.
- Question papers should be closed and scripts should remain within the examination room. If possible, doors should be locked when leaving. **Student and staff safety comes first.**
- If possible, the candidates should be isolated and kept under supervision at all times, and the 1:30 invigilation ratio must be maintained.
- Upon return to the exam room, the exam should be restarted. The emergency and its duration should be logged, and appropriate time added to the exam.
- If it is felt that a particular candidate has been unduly disrupted, the Exams Officer should be notified and may apply for special consideration.
- A report of the incident must be made and the relevant Awarding Body informed after the completion of the examination.

**In the event of an intruder lockdown on site:**

- 1) **Note the time. Calmly inform students we are pausing the exam, and ask them to turn over their exam papers. Follow all further lockdown instructions.**

Management of the situation will depend on the circumstances presented. The following actions should be taken, however staff should be guided by SLT and / or Emergency Services personnel whether to remain inside the premises or be evacuated in a safe and orderly manner away from the premises or situation to a safe area designated by SLT or the Emergency Services.

**On hearing the Lockdown alarm, staff should immediately take the following action:**

- If outside, in communal areas, or in the toilet when the alarm sounds, make your way to the nearest classroom, room or office, and escort students.
- Block all access points, and secure the doors and windows where possible.
- Turn off the lights, and close all curtains and blinds where possible.
- Sit on the floor, stay low and quiet, and away from windows and doors
- Ensure all students and staff are aware of an exit point in case the refuge area becomes unsafe.
- Mobile phones should be set to quiet mode – do not make non-essential calls, use the whatsapp emergency group if essential contact is needed.
- Await instruction or escort by Emergency Services personnel / SLT

**Remember to:**

- Remain calm
- Move slowly
- Obey instructions

If the Fire Alarm is activated during a Lockdown, evacuate to the designated Assembly Point, or secondary Assembly Point, as directed by the Emergency Services personnel / SLT. The Site Team will secure the external doors.

If an intruder has entered the building there will be changes to the procedure, this

may include;

- Directing all pupils, staff and visitors into the nearest classroom or secured space.
- Any outside classes shouldn't enter the building, but go to the evacuation point.
- Lock classroom doors, but do not lock exterior doors.
- Keep pupils seated on the floor and turn off the lights.
- Do not respond to anyone at the door until given the all clear.
- Ignore any fire alarm activation; the school should not be evacuated using this method.

## 2) **Actions to Avoid**

- Do not open the door once it has been secured until the 'All Clear' alarm has sounded
- Do not use or shelter in toilets
- Do not travel down long corridors
- Do not assemble in large open areas
- Do not use the Lift
- Do not take shelter in stairwells or corridors

## 3) **Communication**

During the lockdown, staff will keep agreed lines of communication open but not make unnecessary calls as this could delay more important communication.

Agreed lines of communication are through mobile phones, the school telephone system, or via email.

**After the alarm has ended, ask students to return to their papers and resume the exam with time lost. Special considerations will be applied. Ask them to do their best to continue with the exam. Make note in invigilator notes of all disruptions.**

Appendix 2.

### **Lockdown Policy** **In Place since: June 2018**

A lockdown of a building or group of buildings is an emergency procedure intended to secure and protect occupants who are in the proximity of an immediate threat. This procedure is used when it may be more dangerous to evacuate a building than stay inside. By controlling entry and exit points, Emergency Services are better able to contain and handle any threats. These procedures have been written to provide information on what should happen if the school receives a serious threat to its wellbeing and needs to take swift safety precautions to protect students and staff.

Examples of when a Lockdown Procedure might be instigated are:

- A reported incident / civil disturbance in the local community.
- An unauthorised person / intruder is on the School premises.
- A warning being received regarding a risk locally of air pollution (smoke, gas, chemical spillage, dangerous dog etc).
- A major fire in the vicinity of the School.
- Domestic breakdowns – attempted abduction of children by estranged parties.

- Instances where personnel, students, staff or volunteers become a threat to the wellbeing of others.
- An extreme weather event.
- Any event with the potential to pose a risk to students and staff.

## 1) **Guidelines**

Should a threat be made to the School, a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) should be contacted immediately. The Lockdown Team will assume control and contact the relevant authorities – but staff should be aware that anyone may call the emergency services and there are no limits on updates of information. If it is decided that the School should take action, the following procedures are to be followed.

A notification to All Staff to 'Lockdown' will be sent via the School's Lockdown App, through the internal telephone system, via text and on the email system. No alarm will sound so as not to confuse it with a fire evacuation. The Lockdown team will contact the Police and other Emergency Services as required.

## 2) **Actions to Take on Hearing the Alarm**

Management of the situation will depend on the circumstances presented. The following actions should be taken, however staff should be guided by SLT and / or Emergency Services personnel whether to remain inside the premises or be evacuated in a safe and orderly manner away from the premises or situation to a safe area designated by SLT or the Emergency Services.

### **On hearing the Lockdown alarm, staff should immediately take the following action:**

- If you are outside or in communal areas, escort students into the nearest classroom, room or office.
- If you are in a classroom, room or office, remain there.
- If you are in the toilet when the alarm sounds, make your way immediately to the nearest classroom, room or office.
- Secure the doors and windows, and block all access points where possible.
- Close all curtains / blinds and turn off the lights.
- Sit on the floor, stay low and quiet, and away from windows and doors.
- Ensure all students and staff are aware of an exit point in case an intruder manages to gain access or the refuge area becomes unsafe.
- Mobile phones should be set to quiet mode – do not make non-essential calls, use the whatsapp emergency group if essential contact is needed.
- Await instruction or escort by Emergency Services personnel / SLT.

### **Remember to:**

- Remain calm
- Move slowly
- Obey instructions
- Do not provoke an incident

If the Fire Alarm is activated during a Lockdown, evacuate to the designated Assembly Point, or secondary Assembly Point, as directed by the Emergency Services personnel / SLT. The Site Team will secure the external doors.

If an **intruder has entered** the building there will be changes to the procedure, this may include;

- Directing all pupils, staff and visitors into the nearest classroom or secured space.
- Classes that are outside should not enter the building but be moved to the evacuation point.
- Lock classroom doors, but do not lock exterior doors.
- Keep pupils seated on the floor and turn off the lights.
- Do not respond to anyone at the door until given the all clear.
- Ignore any fire alarm activation; the school should not be evacuated using this method.

### **3) Actions to Avoid**

- Do not open the door once it has been secured until the 'All Clear' alarm has sounded
- Do not use or shelter in toilets
- Do not travel down long corridors
- Do not assemble in large open areas
- Do not use the Lift
- Do not take shelter in stairwells or corridors

### **4) Communication**

During the lockdown, staff will keep agreed lines of communication open but not make unnecessary calls as this could delay more important communication.

Agreed lines of communication are through the school telephone systems, mobile phones, or via email.

In practical terms, all staff should be familiar with accessing their email account through a variety of means, for example, smartphone, tablet, laptop, PC. SLT holds contact details for staff for use in the event of emergency. All Staff communications via the internal telephone system and email will be used during a Lockdown instead of the hierarchical emergency cascade.

### **Internally Within School**

The SLT will communicate with Staff via the internal telephone system and via an All Staff email. Await "All Clear" notification from the emergency services. If you have taken refuge in an area without access to IT or the internal telephone system, await the all clear from emergency services.

Students must not be moved until the All Clear is given, unless in exceptional circumstances, in which case, the nearest alternative area of safety should be used.

### **Externally with Parents / Carers**

School Lockdown procedures are routinely shared with parents / carers, via the School website.

In the event of a Lockdown, parents / carers should be notified as soon as it is reasonably practicable to do so, using the Schools established communications systems – text messaging and the School website. Parents / carers will understandably be concerned but regular communication of accurate information and developments will help alleviate anxiety.

Parents / carers should be given enough information about what is or what will happen so that they:

- Are reassured the School understands their concern for their child's welfare and that everything that can possibly be done to ensure their child's safety is being or will be done
- Do not contact the School via telephone - to keep the telephone lines clear
- Do not attend the School – this could interfere with the Emergency Services response actions and may put themselves or others in danger
- Wait for the School to contact them with details on when it is safe to collect students and where to collect students from, as students will not be released to parents during a Lockdown.

During parental / carer contact, it is also prudent to reinforce the message:

'The school is in a full Lockdown situation. To ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of students and staff, during this period, the Switchboard and Entrances will be un-manned, external doors locked and nobody will be allowed in or out.'

### **Emergency Services**

It is important to keep the lines of communication open with the Emergency Services as they are best placed to offer advice as a situation unfolds. The School may or may not be cordoned off by the Emergency Services depending on the severity of the incident that has triggered the Lockdown. Emergency Services will support the decision of the Principal with regard to the timing of communications to parents / carers.

### **When contacting the emergency services use ETHANE:**

- **E**xact location: The precise location of the incident
- **T**ype: The nature of the incident, including how many vehicles, buildings and so on are involved
- **H**azards: Both present and potential
- **A**ccess: Best route for emergency services to access the site, or obstructions and bottlenecks to avoid
- **N**umbers: Numbers of casualties, dead and uninjured on scene
- **E**mergency services: Which services are already on scene, and which others are required

### 5) **Monitoring and Review**

The Premises Manager is responsible for monitoring this policy and procedures and amending accordingly following incidents or concerns.

The policy will be reviewed by the Premises Manager annually.