

EXAMINATION CONTINGENCY PLAN

Date Reviewed: October 2024

Next Review: October 2025

This plan is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that contingency planning at Palmers Green High School is managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations.

Purpose of the policy

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the examination/assessment process at Palmers Green High School (PGHS).

By outlining actions/procedures to be invoked in case of disruption it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on our examination process.

Alongside internal processes this plan is informed by the Ofqual **Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland** which provides guidance in the publication, 'What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted', the **JCQ Joint Contingency Plan** for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the JCQ document **Preparing for disruption to examinations** (Effective from 1 September 2024).

This plan confirms that PGHS complies with the **JCQ's General Regulations for Approved Centres** by having in place for inspection and updated annually a written examination contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination/assessment administration to be delivered.

Contingency arrangements

In accordance with the General Regulations (3.17-19), PGHS **must** have an up to date written contingency plan.

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

The plan must cover the following scenarios:

- the Head of Centre, relevant senior leaders with oversight of examination and assessment administration, Head of Learning Support, Examinations Officer or any other key

staff essential to the examination process being absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle

- the potential impact of other events such as flooding which could lead to all or parts of the centre becoming unavailable
- potential issues with the centre's IT systems

As part of the contingency plan the centre **must** identify an alternative site if examinations cannot be conducted at the registered address.

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

The Centre **must** ensure that candidates' work is backed-up and should consider the contingency of candidates' work being backed-up on two separate devices, including one off-site back-up. Appropriate security arrangements must be implemented which protect candidates' work in the event of IT system corruption and cyber-attacks.

National Centre Number Register and other information requirements

In accordance with the General Regulations (5.3), the Head of Centre will ensure that The Centre responds to the National Centre Number Register annual update by the end of October every year which includes providing senior designated contact details (this might include a personal mobile number and/or email address). These must be the contact details of someone who can be reached in an emergency if the centre is closed over the summer and who can mobilise resources to respond to the issue.

Head of centre absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle

Where the Head of Centre may be absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle, main duties and responsibilities will be escalated in accordance with the centre's written escalation process.

POSSIBLE CAUSES OF POTENTIAL DISRUPTION TO THE EXAMINATION PROCESS

1. Exams Officer (EO) extended absence at key points in the examination process (cycle)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Planning

- annual data collection exercise not undertaken to collate information on

qualifications and awarding body specifications being delivered

- annual examinations 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

- examination timetabling, rooming allocation and invigilation schedules not prepared
- candidates not briefed on examination timetables and awarding body information for candidates
- examination/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
- invigilators not trained or updated on changes to instructions for conducting exams.

Examination time

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

Results and post-results

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

Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption Listed Above

- Deputy Head to cover role and tasks
- Refer to Awarding Body Annual Manuals
- Access External Exams Section of iSAMS
- Liaise with Awarding Bodies via telephone/online.

2. **Head of Learning Support (SENCo) extended absence at key points in the examination cycle**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the access arrangements process within the examination 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
- modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline
- staff providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained.

Examination time

- access arrangement candidate support not arranged for examination rooms.

Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption Listed Above

- Early Action Plan to be in place by mid-September with all necessary enquiries in and out to teaching staff
- Regular meetings between Head of Learning Support and EO to ensure deadlines are met
- SMT to cover role/task
- SMT & EO to arrange assessor if candidates not assessed prior to final dates for processing on line Access Arrangements.
- EO to arrange all aspects of Access Arrangements from pre-examination time to end of examinations.

3. Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the examination cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

- Estimated entry information not provided to the EO on time; resulting in pre-release information not being received.
- Final entry information not provided to the EO on time; resulting in candidates not being entered for examinations or being entered late or other penalty fees being charged by awarding bodies.
- Non-examination assessments tasks not set/not 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 request an internal appeal on the review of the centre's marking.
- Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet awarding body submission deadlines.

Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption Listed Above

- EO to ensure early requests from HODs for all information required
- Liaise in advance with Awarding Body with regards to possible delays of mark submission.

4. Disruption of teaching time in weeks before an examination – Centre closed for an extended period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre closed for an extended period during normal teaching or study supported time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning.
- Candidate 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 Listed Above

- Recognise it remains the responsibility of the centre to prepare students, as usual, for examinations
- Remote and Blended Learning instigated at the earliest opportunity to ensure continuity of teaching and learning.
- Communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) information relating to alternative methods of learning
- Take advice offered by the awarding body regarding alternative arrangements for conducting examinations that may be available
- Take advice offered by the awarding body on the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations
- Advise candidates, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date

5. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – Centre remains open

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Candidates may not be able to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal because of a crisis.

Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption Listed Above

The Centre will:

- focus on options that enable candidates to take their examinations (referencing the JCQ document Preparing for disruption to examinations)
 - take advice offered by the awarding body on the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations
 - discuss alternative arrangements with the awarding body if a candidate misses an exam or loses their assessment due to an emergency, or other event, outside of the candidate's control
 - identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding body, ensuring the secure transportation of questions papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue
 - communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue
 - consider whether any candidates' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration
6. **Centre may not be able to open as normal during the examination period (including in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency)**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption Listed Above

The Centre will:

- focus on enabling candidates to take their examinations
- take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether the centre is able to open
- contact the relevant awarding body as soon as possible and follow its instructions (This could include implementing alternative arrangements for the conducting of examinations and notifying the JCQ Centre Inspection Service of an alternative site arrangement by submitting the JCQ Alternative Site form online, using the Centre Admin Portal)
- contact the relevant awarding body as soon as possible and follow its instructions
- discuss alternative arrangements with the awarding body if the exam or assessment cannot take place
- follow guidance provided by the awarding body on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances
- where accommodation is limited, prioritise candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- consider whether any candidates' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

7. Centre unable to open as normal during the examination period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Centre unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations (including Centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency).

Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption Listed Above

The Centre will:

- focus on enabling candidates to take their examinations
- The decision on whether it is safe for a centre to open lies with the Head of Centre who is responsible for taking advice for following instructions from relevant local or national agencies.
- The relevant awarding bodies must be contacted if additional support or guidance in the event of disruption to examinations is required.
- discuss alternative arrangements with the awarding body if the exam or assessment cannot take place
- where accommodation is limited, prioritise candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issue
- Applying for Special consideration is an option if all other avenues have been exhausted Candidates meet the published requirements.
- EO to apply for special consideration and fill out necessary JCQ paperwork.

8. 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 examination days.

Invigilator absence on the day of an examination.

Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption Listed Above

- SMT & EO to keep well-informed of the planning, hiring and training of Invigilators, at least 3 months prior to recruitment period.
- EO, SMT or Non-Subject Teacher to cover examination if Invigilator is absent.

9. Examination rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice

Criteria for implementation of the plan

EO unable to identify sufficient/appropriate rooms during examinations timetable planning

Insufficient rooms available on peak exam days

Main examination venues unavailable due to an unexpected incident at examination time.

Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption Listed Above

The Centre will:

- EO to liaise with SMT to arrange alternative site as per agreement with 2 local schools
- Main Hall could be used
- where possible, make use of other available rooms within the centre, prioritising candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding body
- where possible, move to alternative venue, prioritising candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue
- ensure the secure transportation of question papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue
- (after the exam) consider whether any candidate's ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

10. Cyber-attack

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption Listed Above

The EO will work with SMT and IT Team, to make immediate contact with the Awarding Bodies to seek further guidance and support.

The SMT will work with the EO to take action as determined by the relevant Awarding Bodies.

The General Regulation chapter 3.21 ensures there are procedures in place to maintain the security of user accounts by:

- providing training for authorised staff on the importance of creating strong unique passwords and keeping all account details secret
- providing training for staff on awareness of all types of social engineering/ phishing attempts
- enabling additional security settings wherever possible
- updating any passwords that may have been exposed
- setting up secure account recovery options
- reviewing and managing connected applications

- monitoring accounts and regularly reviewing account access, including removing access when no longer required
- 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' multi-factor authentication (MFA) requirements.
- reporting any actual or suspected compromise of an awarding body's online systems immediately to the relevant awarding body
- Back ups are taken daily of the MIS and the date is stored offline
- The systems for restoring the data are reliable and robust
- The school will make contact with the police and Action Fraud
- The school will make contact with National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC)
- The school will inform the Department for Education.

11. Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- IT system corruption affecting candidates' work
- MIS system failure at final entry deadline.
- MIS system failure during examinations preparation.
- MIS system failure at results release time.
- Power outage immediate prior or during an on-screen or computer reader supported exam.

Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption Listed Above

- In accordance with The General Regulations (3.19) Candidates' work must be backed up and should be backed up on two separate devices, including one off-site.
- Implement appropriate security arrangements which protect candidates' work in the event of IT system corruption and cyber-attacks.
- Ensure all entries inputted well before deadline
- Have all necessary preparatory work completed well before start of examinations
- EO will submit entries from another venue directly from the Awarding Bodies secure online website.
- EO will download results remotely from another venue directly from the Awarding Bodies secure online website.
- During the systems failure, the EO will liaise with the Awarding Bodies at all times to minimise disruption.

12. Emergency evacuation of the examination room

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Whole Centre evacuation during examination time due to serious incident resulting in examination candidates being unable to return to examination rooms to start, proceed with or complete their examinations.

Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption Listed Above

- Refer to and invoke Emergency Evacuation Policy During Examinations in line with JCQ's 'Centre emergency evacuation procedure' (or its (exams) lockdown policy)
- Contact Awarding Body and inform them of the situation and follow their instructions
- If necessary, fill out JCQ documentation.
- where accommodation is limited, prioritise candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned

13. 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 Listed Above

- liaise with awarding bodies regarding the provision of electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network and will ensure when copies are received/made these are stored under secure conditions. Centres would need to ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions and should have plans in place to facilitate such an action. Awarding organisations would provide guidance on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances.
- follow guidance provided by the awarding body on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances
- Communicate with awarding bodies to organise alternative delivery of papers
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue
- understand that as a last resort, and in close collaboration with centres and regulators, awarding organisations will consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date

14. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination script / assessment evidence.

Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption Listed Above

The Centre will:

- where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding organisations arrange collections, seek advice from the relevant awarding

organisations and will not make its own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding organisation

- for any examinations where the centre makes its own arrangements for transportation, investigate alternative despatch options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ document Instructions for conducting examinations
- ensure the secure storage of completed examination scripts until as close to the collection time as possible

15. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Large scale damage to or destruction of completed examination scripts/assessment evidence before it can be marked

Completed examination scripts/assessment evidence does not reach awarding organisations

Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption Listed Above

The Centre will:

- liaise with the awarding body to determine if candidate marks for affected assessments may be able to be generated based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding body
- where marks cannot be generated by awarding body, inform candidates they may need to retake the affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series
- communicate this immediately to the relevant awarding bodies and subsequently to candidates and their parents or carers.

16. Centre unable to distribute results as normal (including in the event of the centre being unavailable on results day owing to an unforeseen emergency) or facilitate post-results services

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Centre is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates, or facilitate the post-results services.

Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption Listed Above

The Centre will:

- make arrangements to access its results at an alternative venue/share facilities with another centre if this is possible, in agreement with the relevant awarding body
- make arrangements to coordinate access to post-results services from an alternative venue
- make arrangements to make post-results requests at an alternative location
- contact the relevant awarding body if electronic post-results requests are not possible



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- inform candidates of any alternative arrangements in place for the distribution of results and the facilitation of post-results services
- Centres to contact awarding bodies about alternative options



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Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning

DfE

Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges

Cyber security standards for schools and colleges

Ofqual

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

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

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

Contingency planning

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

Disruption to assessments or exams

In the absence of any instruction from the relevant awarding bodies, 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 bodies 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

Refer to 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 [ICO'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
- [opening schools, childcare and play settings in extreme bad weather and extreme hot weather](#) - guidance for schools from the Welsh Government
- [emergency planning and response guidance for education and childcare settings](#)- guidance for schools and education settings from the Welsh Government
- [protective security and preparedness for education settings](#) from the DfE
- [police guidance](#) from National Counter Terrorism Security Office and partners on preparing for threats
- [cyber security guidance for schools and colleges](#) from the National Cyber Security Centre

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

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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/bodies.

15.3 All centres must have a written examination contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to act immediately in the event of an emergency or where the head of centre, examinations officer or SENCo is absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle. The examination contingency plan should reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency.

All relevant centre staff must be familiar with the examination contingency plan. Consideration should be given as to how these arrangements will be communicated to candidates, parents and staff should disruption to examinations occur.

15.4 In the event that the head of centre decides the centre cannot be opened for scheduled examinations, the 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 2025. 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 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 2025, the awarding bodies will liaise with the qualification regulators and government departments to agree the most appropriate option for managing the impact. As a last resort the affected examinations will be rescheduled. Although every effort would be taken to keep the impact to a minimum, it is possible that there could be more than one timetable date affected following the disruption, up to and including the last contingency day. Centres will be alerted if it is agreed to reschedule the examinations and the affected candidates will be expected to make themselves available in such circumstances. The decision regarding the rescheduling of examinations will always rest with the awarding body. The centre must conduct the examination on the scheduled date unless instructed to do otherwise by the awarding body.

15.8 Where candidates choose not to be available for the rescheduled examination(s) for reasons other than those traditionally covered by special consideration, they will not be eligible for enhanced grading arrangements. Centres must therefore ensure candidates and parents are aware of the contingency arrangements so that they may take them into account when making their plans for the summer.

(JCQ guidance above taken directly from Instructions for conducting examinations 2024-2025

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>, section 15, Contingency planning)

JCQ Joint Contingency Plan www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents

JCQ Preparing for disruption to examinations www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/

JCQ Notice to Centres - Examination contingency plan/examinations policy www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/notice-to-centres--exam-contingency-plan/

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

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

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

Instructions for conducting examinations www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations

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

Guidance for centres on cyber security (Effective from November 2023) www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/

5 tips to get exam ready and stay cyber safe! www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/blogs/

Information for centres affected by RAAC – the delivery of non-examination assessments and the special consideration process www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/non-examination-assessments/



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Further clarification for centres affected by RAAC, Caledonian Modular or similar building issues – March 2024

www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/non-examination-assessments/

GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response: Exam and assessment disruption

www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings

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

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

Wales

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

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

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

Northern Ireland

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

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

National Cyber Security Centre

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

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

