



WREKIN

Exam Contingency Plan

Wrekin College

Exam Contingency Plan

Centre name	Wrekin College
Centre number	29360
Date plan first created	02/10/2023
Current plan approved by	Ben Smith
Current plan reviewed by	Gemma Allen
Date of review	08/09/2026
Date of next review	30/09/2027

Key staff involved in the plan

Role	Name
Head of centre	Mr. Steve Green
Senior leader(s)	Mr Ben Smith - Deputy Head Academic Mr David Blackham - Deputy Head Pastoral Mrs Cora Thurst - SENCo Mr Steve Morton - IT Manager and Safeguarding Mr Angus Harper - Busar
Exams Officer	Mrs. Gemma Allen
SENCo (or equivalent role)	Mrs. Cora Thurst - SENCo
Other staff (if applicable)	Mrs. Cora Thurst - Head of internal exams Dr Guy Roberts - Data Manager

This plan is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that contingency planning at Wrekin College is managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations and reflects centre practice.

Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the examination and assessment process.

By outlining actions/procedures to be invoked in case of disruption it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on processes at Wrekin College.

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by the Ofqual (and Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment) **Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland** which provides guidance in the document *What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted* and the JCQ guidance **Preparing for disruption to examinations**.

This plan also confirms how Wrekin College complies with JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres** (5.3 *Centre management*) by:

- having in place for inspection that must be reviewed and updated annually by a member of the senior leadership team and communicated within the centre, a contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination/assessment administration and delivery
- its contingency planning including succession arrangements for members of staff involved in examination and assessment administration

Contingency arrangements

Operating across more than one centre

Operating on one site only

National Centre Number Register and other information requirements

The head of centre will ensure that the centre 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. (GR 5.3)

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

When the Head of Centre is absent at a critical stage of the Examination cycle, his main duties will pass directly to Deputy Head Academic, Mr. Ben Smith.

Mr Ben Smith's role will be escalated to oversee exams as acting Head of Centre.

Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

1. Exams manager/officer extended absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Planning

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

Entries

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

Pre-exams

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

Exam time

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

Results and post-results

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

Other criteria:

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

In the event of the Examinations Officer's long-term absence, the Senior Management Team (SMT) will nominate a qualified deputy to cover the role and tasks, designated as Cora Thurst. To ensure operational resilience, experienced staff members Chris Hurd and Carol Gibbs can be called upon to provide extra support based on their extensive knowledge of the examination system. The SMT will allocate additional working hours to the deputy to guarantee sufficient capacity to cover the required workload, and further assistance may be sought by networking with staff at other local centres. For detailed instructions on all official exam procedures, relief staff should consult The Exams Office portal as a primary information resource. To ensure continuity, relief staff must be securely provisioned with access to all essential storage procedures, including door key codes, staff network usernames and passwords, and secure exam board websites. To facilitate this, Mr Ben Smith will establish and maintain secure login credentials with all exam boards, ensuring he is fully equipped to download digital papers on the day of an examination. Finally, the Centre must always report any long-term absence directly to the awarding bodies, as they can often provide flexibility with deadlines and additional procedural guidance in these circumstances.

2. SENCo (or equivalent role) extended absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the access arrangements process within the exam cycle not undertaken including:

Planning

- candidates not tested/assessed to identify potential access arrangement requirements
- centre fails to recognise its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010
- evidence of need and evidence to support normal way of working not collated

Pre-exams

- approval for access arrangements not applied for to the awarding body
- centre-delegated arrangements not put in place
- modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline
- staff (facilitators) providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained

Exam time

- access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms

Other criteria:

No further criteria

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

In the event of the SENCo's absence, the Senior Management Team (SMT) will nominate a qualified deputy to cover the role and tasks, designated as Mr Ben Smith, who will work in direct liaison with the Support for Learning (SfL) Department Deputy. To ensure continuity of access arrangements, the SMT will appoint an appropriately qualified assessor to test candidates in place of the SENCo. Provided there is sufficient warning and planning time, the processing of exam board approvals and the coordination of access arrangements will be delegated directly to the Exams Office. Furthermore, Mr Ben Smith will coordinate all student support requirements during examinations in close liaison with the Exams Office.

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

- Early/estimated entry information not provided to the exams manager/officer on time; resulting in pre-release information not being received
- Final entry information not provided to the exams manager/officer on time; resulting in candidates not being entered for exams/assessments or being entered late/late or other penalty fees being charged by awarding bodies
- Non-examination assessment tasks (including controlled assessment and coursework) not set/issued/taken by candidates as scheduled
- Candidates not being informed of centre-assessed marks before marks are submitted to the awarding body and therefore not being able to consider appealing internal assessment decisions and requesting a review of the centre's marking
- Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet awarding body submission deadlines

Other criteria:

No further criteria

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

In the absence of a classroom teacher, Heads of Departments (HoDs) must assume full responsibility for submitting any missing examination entries, coursework marks, and internal assessment marks. In cases where a department has only a single member of staff who is absent, this responsibility will fall directly to Mr Ben Smith to ensure all data is completed in a timely manner. To mitigate the risk of technical issues and avoid costly late fees, all initial entries must be submitted well ahead of official deadlines, noting that amendments can always be processed at a later date to confirm final candidate entry details.

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Failure to recruit and train sufficient invigilators to conduct exams
- Invigilator shortage on peak exam days
- Invigilator absence on the day of an exam

Other criteria:

No further criteria

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

To manage sudden invigilator shortages, the Centre will first check the availability of other internal invigilators who previously indicated availability for that specific slot. To build operational resilience, Wrekin College will ensure that as many teaching staff as possible complete official exam invigilation training annually; PMS will review free staff within the disrupted teaching period to deploy them and set academic cover appropriately. If staffing levels remain critical, the Examinations Officer will assess whether it is possible to amalgamate any access arrangement rooms to safely release a qualified invigilator. As a last resort, the Centre will call upon the Senior Management Team (SMT) or other trained non-teaching staff to invigilate, or employ external agency staff if recruitment shortfalls persist.

5. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venue(s) unavailable at short notice

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Other criteria:

No further criteria

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- (where main exam venue(s) unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time) 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 main exam venue(s) unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time) 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
- **Alternative site(s) details:**
A clear rooming plan for examinations must be determined at the beginning of each academic year to guarantee sufficient space and compliance. For the 2026–27 academic year, the designated default examination rooms are the Memorial Hall, CS2 Studio, Library Corridor (for individual rooms), and the OWA Room. In the event that primary spaces are unavailable, the authorized backup exam accommodations are the Sports Hall, Sports Hall Conference Room, and the Centenary Theatre. All room bookings must be secured well in advance to prevent capacity shortfalls. If an emergency occurs on the day of an exam, the Examinations Officer will check available free rooms via iSAMS and relocate students accordingly; if the entire school cohort is sitting exams simultaneously, the Centre will dynamically reallocate and utilize the standard classrooms assigned to that specific Year group.
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue
- **Communication details:**
Parents and carers will be informed in a timely fashion by Mr. Steven Green
- 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

Other centre actions:

No other actions identified.

6. Cyber security

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Other criteria:

No other criteria

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

In the event of a security breach or technical disruption, the Centre will strictly follow the school's established policy on cyberattacks. The Examinations Officer must report any findings to the relevant exam board immediately, regardless of whether the incident is confirmed as a real breach or identified as a potential attack. The Centre will fully engage and cooperate with the awarding body to investigate the scope of the incident and implement any required remedial actions where necessary.

7. Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- IT system corruption affecting candidates' work

- MIS/IT system failure at final entry deadline
- MIS/IT system failure during exams preparation
- Technical failure or power outage immediately prior to or during an on-screen examination
- MIS/IT system failure at results release time

Other criteria:

No other criteria identified.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

To mitigate the risk of technical disruption, all examination entries must be submitted well in advance of the official deadlines. In the event of a last-minute IT failure during an entry window, the Examinations Officer must immediately contact the relevant exam boards by telephone to explain the situation and formally request an extension in writing. Staff should attempt to access iSAMS through an alternative computer system (such as from home) or via another user, noting that Dr Guy Roberts holds the necessary administrative privileges to assist. Furthermore, the Examinations Officer must proactively liaise with the IT department prior to results days to ensure all download systems are fully operational and optimized for smooth processing.

8. Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lockdown)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Whole centre evacuation (or lockdown) during exam time due to serious incident resulting in exam candidates being unable to start, proceed with or complete their exams

Other criteria:

No other criteria identified.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- refer to and invoke its (exams) emergency evacuation policy/procedure in line with JCQ's 'Centre emergency evacuation procedure' (or its (exams) lockdown policy)
- contact the relevant awarding body as soon as possible and follow its instructions
- where accommodation is limited, prioritise candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- (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

Other centre actions:

In the event of an emergency requiring a complete building evacuation during an examination, all staff and candidates must strictly follow the school's standard Fire Evacuation Policy. The Examinations Officer or lead invigilator will ensure that Mr Angus Harper is contacted immediately to coordinate the overarching emergency response. To preserve the integrity and continuity of the examination cycle where safe to do so, Dr Robert and Sue Blacker will directly assist in relocating candidates and establishing immediate temporary exam room allocations.

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre closed or candidates are unable to attend for an extended period during normal teaching or study supported time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning

Other criteria:

no other criteria identified.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- recognise it remains the responsibility of the centre to prepare students, as usual, for examinations
- facilitate alternative methods of learning
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) information relating to alternative methods of learning
- **Communication details:**
In the event of widespread disruption to teaching and learning time, Wrekin College retains full responsibility for ensuring students are thoroughly prepared for their examinations as usual. To minimise the impact of lost instructional time, the Centre will facilitate alternative methods of learning, including transitioning to online learning and remote delivery platforms as necessary. For students enrolled in modular courses, the college may strategically advise candidates to defer and sit their examinations during an alternative, subsequent series to ensure they are not academically disadvantaged.
- 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

Other centre actions:

no other actions identified

10. Candidates may not be able to take examinations - centre remains open

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Other criteria:

No other criteria identified.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

-
- 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
- **Communication** details:
Parents and carers will be notified without delay by the Head of center Mr. Steven Green
- 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

Other centre actions:

In the event that candidates are unable to sit an exam at the main site, the Centre will liaise with candidates to determine if the examination can be accommodated at an alternative venue, in strict agreement with the relevant awarding organisations. To facilitate this, the Centre will contact local educational providers, such as Charlton School or other neighbouring institutions, to seek emergency assistance. For candidates unable to utilize an alternative site, the Centre will offer the opportunity to sit any missed examinations during the next available series. Additionally, the Centre will apply to the awarding organisations for special consideration on behalf of candidates who meet the mandatory criteria. To be eligible under Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) regulations, candidates must have been fully prepared and have covered the entire course, but were ultimately prevented from sitting the exam due to adverse, uncontrollable circumstances. Candidates must be clearly advised that if they choose not to sit an examination for any other reason, special consideration rules will not apply.

11. Centre may not be able to open for examinations

(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

Other criteria:

No other criteria

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

-
- (although the decision on whether it is safe to open lies with the head of centre) 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)
- 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

- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue
- **Alternative site(s) details:**
 - Centre to open for examinations and examination candidates only, if possible.
 - Centre to use alternative venues in agreement with relevant awarding organisations (e.g. use other public buildings, if possible – e.g. Main Sports Hall/Old Hall School venues, or share facilities with other centres)
 - Centre may offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series.
 - Centre to apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements.

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

To ensure clear and consistent messaging during an emergency, all communications with parents and carers will be handled directly by the Head of Centre, Mr Steve Green
- 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

Other centre actions:

No other centre action

12. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Other criteria:

Upon delivery, the Centre will thoroughly inspect all examination papers immediately upon arrival and promptly alert the relevant awarding bodies of any discrepancies. If paper shortages, incorrect tiers, or delivery issues are identified on the day of an examination, the Examinations Officer will contact the exam boards immediately to secure alternative access. In such emergencies, awarding organisations will provide digital download to the examination papers via a secure network. To maintain strict compliance, the Examinations Officer is responsible for ensuring that all emergency copies are received, duplicated, and safely stored under secure conditions until the start of the examination.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- 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
- follow guidance provided by the awarding body on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances
- 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

- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue

Other centre actions:

No other actions identified

13. Delay in collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Other criteria:

No other criteria

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 collection arrangements, investigate alternative options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ document *Instructions for conducting examinations*
- keep completed examination scripts in the secure room until as close to the collection time as possible - ensuring script packages are not left unattended in the collection area

Other centre actions:

In the event of an emergency disruption to script collections, Wrekin College will first seek immediate advice from the relevant awarding organisations and our regular collection agency. The Centre will strictly avoid making independent transportation or courier arrangements without explicit prior approval from the exam boards. The only exception to this policy applies to Pearson assessments, where alternative transportation can be arranged independently, provided that comprehensive recorded delivery records are meticulously kept and archived. To safeguard the integrity of the examination cycle during any delay, the Centre will ensure the secure storage of all completed examination papers until collection. All examination scripts must be securely locked within the dedicated Exams Office; if this room is compromised or inaccessible, scripts will immediately be transferred and secured inside the main safe located in the Admissions and key kept with Sophie Hinson.

14. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Other criteria:

No other criteria

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

Other centre actions:

In the event that completed assessment evidence or examination scripts are disrupted or lost before marking, the Centre will notify the relevant awarding bodies immediately. We will liaise directly with the awarding organisations to determine if candidate marks can be generated for the affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement, as defined by the exam boards. In exceptional circumstances where valid marks cannot be generated through alternative evidence, affected candidates will be supported to retake the assessment during the subsequent examination window.

15. 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 to facilitate post-results services

Other criteria:

No other criteria

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 site
- **Alternative site(s) details:**
In the event of severe disruption preventing access to the main school site, the Centre will promptly notify all relevant awarding bodies to register the emergency and initiate our contingency protocols. To ensure uninterrupted operations, arrangements will be established to access examination results from an alternative site, or securely from home where possible, alongside coordinated remote access to vital post-results services. If necessary, the Centre will seek to share facilities with other local educational providers; under this protocol, arrangements have been established to partner with Shrewsbury High School (formerly Charlton School) or other neighbouring centres to ensure candidates can safely sit their exams or access their outcomes. Candidates, parents, and carers will be kept informed of these alternative arrangements via email as the situation develops.
- make arrangements to make post-results requests at an alternative location
- contact the relevant awarding body if electronic post-results requests are not possible
- inform candidates of any alternative arrangements in place for the distribution of results and the facilitation of post-results services
- **Communication details:**
parents and carers will be informed in a timely fashion by Mr. Steve Green, Head of centre

Other centre actions:

No other actions

16. Any other cause of disruption to the exam process

Cause of disruption

Exams Officer Absent on an Exam Day

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

Carol Gibbs is fully trained to step in and manage the role of Examinations Officer to ensure operational continuity in the event of an absence. System access and high-level security tasks are designated to Ben Smith, who holds the physical keys to the secure exam store, login details for secure exam board websites, and access to the Exam Officer network account and email. Furthermore, both Ben Smith and Guy Roberts maintain full access to the iSAMs exams database. To manage daily exam logistics, Ben Smith maintains full operational awareness of individual exam arrangements, access arrangements, exam room staffing, and secure exam paper despatch. Supporting these efforts on the ground, Guy Roberts will directly coordinate daily staffing and invigilation requirements, ensuring all exam rooms remain compliant and properly monitored.

Changes effective from 1 September 2026

(Updated)

- Under heading **Purpose of the plan** updated wording to reflect changes in GR 3.31-36 and 5.3
- Under section **Cyber security** updated reference to GR 3.38
- Under section **Failure of IT systems** added reference to *Technical failure or power outage immediately prior to or during an on-screen examination*
- Under heading **Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning** updated various hyperlinks

Centre-specific changes

Upon review in September 2024, no centre-specific updates or changes were applicable to this document.

2026 -2027 removed - Wrekin College not having up-to-date examination board access to download digital papers by more than one person.

Change of location and person -All examination scripts must be securely locked within the dedicated Exams Office; if this room is compromised or inaccessible, scripts will immediately be transferred and secured inside the main safe located in the Admissions and key kept with Sophie Hinson.

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](#)

Ofqual

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

"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

- Contact the relevant awarding organisation and follow its instructions.
- Take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether your centre is able to open.
- Identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation, ensuring the secure transportation of questions papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue.
- Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned.

- In the event of an evacuation during an examination please refer to JCQ's [Centre emergency evacuation procedure](#)
- Communicate with students, parents and carers any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.
- Communicate with any external assessors, invigilators or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable.

After the exam

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

Steps the awarding organisation should take

Exam planning

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

In the event of disruption

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

After the exam

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

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

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

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

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

Wider communications

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

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

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

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

Widespread national disruption to the taking of examinations or assessments

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

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

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

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

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

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

General contingency guidance

- [emergency planning and response for education, childcare and children's social care settings](#) from the DfE in England
- [handling strike action in schools](#) from the DfE in England
- [school organisation: local-authority-maintained schools](#) from the DfE in England
- [reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete: guidance for education settings with confirmed RAAC](#) from the DfE in England
- [exceptional closure days: 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"

JCQ

Instructions for conducting examinations www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/instructions-for-conducting-examinations-ice/ (with particular reference to section 15, **Contingency planning**)

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

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/

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

Guidance for centres on cyber security www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/

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

Wales

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

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

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 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