

**Exam Contingency Plan**

Date: September 2023

Review: September 2024

Key staff involved

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| --- | --- |
| Role | Name(s) |
| Head of centre | Kelly Osborne-James |
| Exams Officer | Ruth Halsall |
| SENCo | Dr Caroline Kafka-Markey |
| Senior leader(s) | David McDonald |
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Table of contents

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Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at The Deanery CE Academy. By outlining actions/procedures to be invoked in case of disruption it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on our exam process.

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by the Ofqual (andNorthern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment) **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* and the **JCQ** **Joint Contingency Plan**for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the JCQ document **Preparing for disruption to examinations** (Effective from 1 September 2023).

This plan also confirms The Deanery CE Academy’s compliance with JCQ’s **General Regulations for Approved Centres** (section 5.3)that the centre has in place:

* a written examination contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to act immediately in the event of an emergency or where the head of centre, examinations officer or SENCo is absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle. The examination contingency plan should reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations, or on results day, owing to an unforeseen emergency. The potential impact of a cyber-attack should also be considered.

Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

### Exam Manager 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 the post-results services

**Centre Actions:**

* Awarding bodies contacted to request extension of deadlines
* Head of centre may recruit temporary Exams Officer to support

### SENCo extended absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Planning

* candidates not tested/assessed to identify potential access arrangement requirements
* 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:**

* SENCo assistant can identify candidates not yet approved by Awarding bodies
* Exams Manager to organise staff to support Access Arrangements and to invigilate exams
* Obtain help from other staff trained in testing for Access Arrangements

### Teaching staff extended absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

* Early/estimated entry information not provided to the exams manager on time; resulting in pre-release information not being received
* Final entry information not provided to the exams manager 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 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

**Centre Actions:**

* Head of Centre to provide Exams Manager with estimated/final entries
* Head of Centre to provide Exams Manager with coursework marks and samples
* Head of Centre may recruit temporary Teachers to provide support

### Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

**Centre Actions:**

* Exams Manager to ensure that an appropriate number of school staff are also trained to invigilate and can therefore be deployed by the Head of Centre to provide support in exams.

### Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

**Centre Actions:**

* Exams Manager and Head of Centre to source alternative venues.

### Cyber-attack

Criteria for implementation of the plan

* Threat of or actual unauthorised access to school data
* Threat of or actual theft of data
* Damage to computers, computer network or other computing systems

**Centre Actions:**

* Head of Centre to liaise with IT providers, National Cyber Security Centre and police
* Exams Manager to contact awarding bodies immediately and establish way forward
* Exams Manager to liaise with IT to establish a secure login to be able to regain access to the awarding body secure websites
* Exams Manager to identify any technology requirements for assessments at the time and liaise with IT to ensure replacement standalone technology is available
* Exams Manager to liaise with teaching staff with regards to impending awarding body deadlines for the submission of coursework marks and sample work, advising of extended deadlines where appropriate
* Advise email contacts to be alert for suspicious mail

### Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

**Centre Actions:**

* Exams Manager to communicate with relevant Awarding bodies at the outset to resolve the issue
* IT Support called to support urgent retrieval of systems
* Awarding bodies contacted to request extension to deadline
* Results can be downloaded direct from Awarding bodies website and from another location

### 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

**Centre Actions:**

* The centre to communicate with relevant awarding bodies at the outset to make them aware of the issue
* The centre to communicate with parents/carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issue

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

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| Criteria for implementation of the plan   * Centre closed or candidates are unable to attend for an extended period during normal teaching or study supported time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning |
| **Centre actions:**   * The centre will recognise it remains the responsibility of the centre to prepare students, as usual, for examinations * The centre will facilitate alternative methods of learning * The centre will communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) information relating to alternative methods of learning * The centre will take advice offered by the awarding body regarding alternative arrangements for conducting examinations that may be available * The centre will take advice offered by the awarding body on the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations * The centre will advise candidates, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date |

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

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| Criteria for implementation of the plan  Candidates may not be able to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal |
| **Centre actions:**   * The centre will take advice offered by the awarding body on the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations * The centre will 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 * The centre will 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 * The centre will communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue |

### 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)

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| Criteria for implementation of the plan  Centre may not be able to open as normal for scheduled examinations |
| **Centre actions**:   * The centre will take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether the centre is able to open * The centre will contact the relevant awarding body as soon as possible and follow its instructions * The centre will discuss alternative arrangements with the awarding body if the exam or assessment cannot take place * The centre will 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 * The centre will communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue   Alternative venue details:   * St John's Parish & Conference Centre * Other local venues to be confirmed |

### 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:**

* Exams Manager to contact awarding bodies and request electronic access to exam papers via a secure external network.
* Exams Manager to ensure that copies are received and stored under secure conditions
* Exams Manager to seek guidance from awarding bodies on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances. As a last resort, and in close collaboration with centres and regulators, awarding bodies to consider scheduling of the exam on an alternative date

### Disruption to transporting completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

**Centre actions:**

* Exams Officer to contact the relevant awarding bodies for advice and instructions
* Exams Officer to investigate alternative options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ publication Instructions for conducting examinations
* Exams Officer to ensure secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection

### 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:**

* Head of Centre to request that awarding bodies generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement
* Where marks cannot be generated by awarding bodies, candidates may need to retake affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series

### Centre unable to distribute results as normal 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 (including in the event of the centre being unavailable on results day owing to an unforeseen emergency)

**Centre actions:**

* Exams Manager and/or Head of Centre to make arrangements to access results at an alternative site, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation
* Exams Manager and/or Head of Centre to make arrangements to coordinate access to post results services from an alternative site
* Head of Centre to make arrangements to share facilities with other centres if this is possible, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation
* Exams Manager to contact the relevant awarding organisation if electronic post results requests are not possible

Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

(JCQ guidance above taken directly from **Instructions for conducting examination**s 2022-2023 <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](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents)

JCQ notice - Preparing for disruption to examinations (effective from 11 October 2021) [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents)

JCQ Notice to Centres - Examination contingency plan/examinations policy [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/notice-to-centres--exam-contingency-plan/](http://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](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)

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](https://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](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service)

ProtectUK

[www.protectuk.police.uk](https://www.protectuk.police.uk)

National Cyber Security Centre

The NCSC's free [Web Check](https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/information/web-check) and [Mail Check](https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/information/mailcheck) services can help protect schools from cyber-attacks.  Two NCSC cyber security services, which are already helping thousands of organisations to protect their websites and email servers from cyber-attacks, are now available to **all UK schools**.  Both tools are available free of charge, are quick to set up, and thereafter run automatically.  More information is available from the [NCSC website](https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/blog-post/cyber-tools-for-uk-schools).

The Department for Education has been asking centres to review **National Cyber Security Centre advice** following increasing number of cyber-attacks involving ransomware infections. The NCSC information supports centres in cyber security preparedness and mitigation work.

Ransomware attacks continue and the Department is reminding centres to review the NCSC advice and to take precautions. This includes ensuring that you have backups in place for your key services and data.

For ease of reference, the Department has highlighted key links relating to the NCSC cyber security guidance below:

1. [More ransomware attacks on UK education - NCSC.GOV.UK](https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/news/alert-targeted-ransomware-attacks-on-uk-education-sector)
2. [Ransomware advice and guidance for your IT teams to implement](https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/mitigating-malware-and-ransomware-attacks)
3. [Offline backups in an online world](https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/blog-post/offline-backups-in-an-online-world)
4. [Backing up your data](https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/collection/small-business-guide/backing-your-data)
5. [Practical resources to help improve your cyber security](https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/education-skills/cyber-security-schools)
6. [Building Resilience: Ransomware and the risks to schools and ways to prevent it](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FppzWedY0ic&t=237s)
7. [School staff offered training to help shore up cyber defences - NCSC.GOV.UK](https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/news/school-staff-offered-training-to-help-cyber-defences)