



# Exam Contingency Plan

## 2020/21

This plan is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
K James/ W Nalli	
Date of next review	October 2021

**Key staff involved in contingency planning**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name(s)</b>
Head of centre	<b>Kaz James</b>
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## Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at Stanborough School, Watford. 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** 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 in the event of widespread disruption to the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

- This plan also confirms Stanborough School, Watford is compliant with the JCQ regulation (section 5.3, General Regulations for Approved Centres 2020-21) that the Centre has in place a written examination contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the Head of Centre to act immediately in the event of an emergency or staff absence.

**Possible causes of disruption to the exam process**

## 1. Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- In the event of EO extended absence, Head to appoint an acting Exams Officer as soon as possible, ensuring the Key tasks as listed above are understood
- Data Manager/ Head of IT to assist in tasks which involve Progresso and online exams entries
- Exam Boards to be kept informed of developments
- Exams Officer to ensure essential information is available to the Head
- Annual membership to The Exams Office <https://www.theexamsoffice.org/> ( Not yet member)
- Examinations Procedures – resources to support processes include: Exam Officers Annual Handbook, Exams Calendar, Annual Exams Plan, Exam day checklist
- Exams Officer to ensure the Exams policies and procedures are up to date at all times • Invigilation training for new staff to be completed

## 2. SENCo extended absence at key points in 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Head to appoint an experienced member of the SEN team as acting SENCo as soon as possible.
- Testing and Assessments continue to be carried out by qualified members of the SEND team.
- Applications for Access Arrangements to be made in conjunction with the Exams Officer.
- Senior members of the SEND team to be fully up to date with JCQ Regulations (Orange Book)
- Check documentation with SEND Clerical Support

**3. Curriculum Director/Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle**

Criteria for implementation of the plan *Key*

*tasks not undertaken including:*

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

*Final entry information not provided to the exams officer on time; resulting in candidates not being entered for exams/assessments or being entered late/late or other penalty fees being charged by awarding bodies*

*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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Adjust the timetable as far as is practicable to ensure subject specialist teachers are teaching examination groups
- Head to appoint acting CD or subject teacher/specialist supply staff, as required

**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*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Contact other invigilators on our contact list to bring them into school
- Use trained agency staff on our contact list
- If possible, reseat examinations to reduce the number of invigilators that are required
- Combine satellite rooms if appropriate for SEND
- Use senior staff as invigilators- following JCQ regulations

**5. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

*Exams officer unable to identify sufficient/appropriate rooms during exams timetable planning*

*Insufficient rooms available on peak exam days*

*Main exam venues unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Pre-planning is essential. Exam rooms are allocated well in advance of the examinations window by Cover and Lettings Managers in consultation with the Assistant Head and the Exams Officer.
- Use alternative spaces in school where appropriate
- Reseat examinations, if possible to reduce the number of rooms required
- Invigilators/ School staff will assist the Exams Officer in maintaining the security of exam papers should a venue be changed a very short notice.
- Exams Officer to ensure that any late-notice rooms comply with regulations as set out in the JCQ ICE book.

**6. Failure of IT systems**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

*MIS system failure at final entry deadline*

*MIS system failure during exams preparation*

*MIS system failure at results release time*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Failure at Entry Deadline – Head of centre to liaise with Data Manager/ Head of IT and Exams Officer to enable a swift resolution to any issues. Exams Officer to contact exam boards as quickly as possible to identify alternative route for processing entries (e.g. via exam board secure websites).
- Failure during exams preparation – Head of centre to liaise with the Data Manager/ Head of IT as above. Exams Officer to inform exam boards of ongoing situation
- Failure at results release time –Head of centre to liaise with Data Manager/ Head of IT and Exams Officer to enable a swift resolution to any issues. Exams Officer to contact exam boards as quickly as possible to identify alternative route for receiving results (e.g. via exam board secure sites).

**7. Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down)**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Invigilators, Assistant Head, SLT, Head of Sixth Form and Exams Officer to ensure emergency evacuation plan is followed, maintaining the integrity of the exam
- Candidates to be held separately, avoiding contact with other pupils, and ensuring that they do not talk to one another; candidates will be relocated to another of our venues wherever possible • Exam boards to be advised as appropriate

Lockdown

- Please see the separate Lockdown Policy (Exams), available on the school website

**8. 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*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The centre to communicate with parents, carers, students and staff about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this.
- Head/Assistant Head to prioritise teaching venues on campus for students in exam years if possible
- Exams Officer to inform exam boards of developments
- Consider use of alternative venues

**9. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

*Candidates are unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue.
- Correct documentation is completed
- The centre to communicate with parents, carers, staff and candidates regarding solutions to the issue
- Consider use of alternative venues

COVID-19 disruption

- Follow all national/local guidelines (of the day)
- If student tests positive for COVID-19 follow PHE guidelines, including NHS track and trace to ascertain if candidate(s) have been in close contact with other students/staff in school
- Contact parents/carers to inform of the procedures.
- Consider special consideration applications if students are self-isolating

**10. Centre unable 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 unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- School will always remain open for examination candidates unless a situation means that it is unsafe for anyone to enter the building.
- Exams Officer to inform each awarding organisation which examinations are affected as soon as possible
- Centre to communicate with parents, carers, candidates and staff regarding alternative arrangements
- Alternative accommodation is sought as quickly as possible

COVID-19 disruption

- Follow all national/local guidelines (of the day)
- Contact awarding bodies for further guidance for a national/local lockdown
- Contact parents/carers to inform of the procedures. Ensure these are widely shared via website and media sources
- Consider special consideration applications if students are self-isolating

**11. 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

- Frequent checks of deliveries of examination papers are made
- Examination Boards are contacted immediately if papers are not delivered by the expected date and act on advice provided by Examinations Boards
- If awarding organisations provide electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network. Examination officer to ensure handling and access to copies when received, made and stored is kept under secure conditions using passwords and encrypted online storage.

**12. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Exams Officer to communicate with relevant awarding organisations as soon as possible to resolve the issue.
- Scripts to be stored securely according to JCQ regulations until transport is confirmed.
- If alternative secure delivery options are advised, proof of postage is obtained

### 13. 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

- EO contacts Assistant Head teacher responsible for exams
- Contact Examination Board and parents immediately on discovery of the issue
- Examination Board instructions are distributed to the Exams Officer, Head of Centre, Assistant Headteacher, Subject department, Parents and Pupils

### 14. Centre unable to distribute results as normal or facilitate post results services

(including in the event of the centre being unavailable on results day owing to an unforeseen emergency)

#### Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

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

- Unable to access results - Exams Officer will contact awarding bodies regarding alternative options (e.g., download results from awarding body secure websites)
- Unable to distribute results - the centre will communicate with parents, carers, students and CDs with details of alternative arrangements (e.g. alternative site). Information also to be posted on the school website and communicated to reception staff/porters/ school office.
- Alternative arrangements for post-results services to be communicated to parents, carers, students, CDs, reception staff, school office.

**Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning**

**Ofqual**

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

### 1. Contingency planning

You should prepare for possible disruption to exams and other assessments and make sure staff are aware of these plans.

When drafting contingency plans, you should consider the following guidance:

#### 1.1 Covid specific guidance:

- Guidance for schools Covid-19 from the Department for Education in England (subject to frequent updates as the situation changes)
- Responsibility for autumn GCSE, AS and A level exam series from the Department for Education in England
- Action for FE Colleges from the Department for Education in England
- Public health guidance to support autumn exams from the Department for Education
- Education and childcare: coronavirus from Welsh Government
- Covid-19 - guidance for school and educational settings from Department of Education in Northern Ireland

#### 1.2 General contingency guidance

- Emergency planning and response from the Department for Education in England
- Opening and closing Independent schools from the Department for Education in England
- Exceptional closure days from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- Checklist - exceptional closure of schools from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland • School closures from NI Direct
- Opening schools in extremely bad weather - guidance for schools from the Welsh Government
- Procedures for handling bomb threats from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office.

### 2. 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

See also:

- JCQ Joint Contingency Plan for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

### 3. Steps you should take

#### 3.1 Exam planning

Review 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.

#### 3.2 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 parents, carers and students any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.
7. Communicate with any external assessors or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable.

#### 3.3 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 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.
- 4. Steps the awarding organisation should take**

#### 4.1 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.

#### **4.2 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 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.

#### **4.3 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.

#### **5. 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.

See also:

- JCQ's guidance on special considerations

#### **6. Wider communications**

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

The Department for Education 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.

#### **7. Widespread national disruption to the taking of examinations / assessments**

The governments' view across England, Wales and Northern Ireland is education should continue in 2020/21 with schools remaining open and that examinations and assessments will go ahead in both autumn 2020 and summer 2021.

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 exam timetables.

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

(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 (updated 01 October 2020)

<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>)

## **JCQ**

15.1 The qualification regulators, JCQ 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/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-if-exams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted>

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 Centres should prepare plans for any disruption to examinations as part of their general emergency planning. It is important to ensure that relevant centre staff are familiar with the 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 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.

15.5 The awarding bodies will designate a 'contingency day' for examinations, summer 2021. This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

The designation of a 'contingency day' 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.

In the event of national disruption to a day of examinations in summer 2021, 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 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.

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 this contingency arrangement so that they may take it into account when making their plans for the summer. However, the awarding bodies will not insist upon candidates being available throughout the entire timetable period as a matter of course.

(JCQ guidance above taken directly from Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2020-2021 <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-forconducting-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)

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/regulationsand-guidance](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulationsand-guidance)

## **GOV.UK**

Emergency planning and response: Severe weather; Exam disruption [www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schoolsand-early-years-settings](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schoolsand-early-years-settings)

Opening and closing local-authority-maintained schools [www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools)

Dispatch of exam scripts guide: Ensuring the service runs smoothly; Contingency planning  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service>

## **National Counter Terrorism Security Office**

Procedures for handling bomb threats [www.gov.uk/government/publications/bomb-threats-guidance/procedures-for-handling-bombthreats](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bomb-threats-guidance/procedures-for-handling-bombthreats)