

Policy/Procedure creator: Nicola Maker

Policy/Procedure created/reviewed: 10/10/2022

Centre Name	Medeshamstede Academy
Centre Number	22376
Date plan first created	11.11.21
Current plan approved by	Charlie Smith
Current plan reviewed by	Nicola Maker
Date of next review	10.10.23

## Key staff involved in the plan

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	Charlie Smith
Senior leader(s)	Sarah Martin, Jamie Jones , Nathanael Spalding, Sarah Johnson
Exams officer	Nicola Maker
ALS lead/SENCo	Charlie Smith
Other staff (if applicable)	Not Applicable

This plan is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that exam contingency planning at Medeshamstede Academy is managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations.

## Purpose of the plan

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

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 at Medeshamstede Academy.

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** for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

This plan details how Medeshamstede Academy complies with the JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres** (section 5.3, Centre management) by having 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 staff absence. 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.

### Operating across more than one centre

- This does not apply to this centre

## Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

### 1. Exams officer absence at key points in the exam process (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:

No other criteria identified

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

The centre will:

The Deputy Principals (DP) and Assistant Principal (AP) have the sufficient knowledge of the process to ensure that the examinations function continues to be performed.

- The annual data collection exercise at our centre is conducted by the EO using a proforma. In this situation the DP's could inform the boards of the information.
- Accounts are set up for all online services that the DH will need to use in the EO's absence. eAQA, The Exams Office, SIMS, Edexcel online, Gateway and ASDAN.
- The annual exams plan is in place to highlight actions by required dates, and is distributed to all secondary staff and SLT involved in exams.
- The centre has subscribed to The Exams Office and their tools can be accessed by the DP and AP to support with all aspects of the exams function.
- A planning meeting is held at the beginning of the academic year with the EO/DP/AP and Principal/SENDCo to highlight required access arrangement applications in order to inform the specialist assessors workload and deadlines.
- The key documents published by the JCQ are accessible to SLT – kept in the exams file in the school office.
- The centre is part of a group of Academies supported by a central team, the Greenwood Academies Trust. The centre is also located adjacent to another GAT run Academy (COPA centre number 22378) and support for systems and processes could be sought through the EO located there, as well as a number of other GAT academies within the locality.
- The Deputy Principal's and Principal have sufficient knowledge to inform rooming and invigilation whilst ensuring that the students' SEN do not impact on others within the room, allowing for all of the individual access arrangements and that the teacher involved in delivering the course is not part of the team supporting the examination.
- The Exams Officer, Office manger and Senior administrator are the only other members of staff with knowledge of how to access the confidential material within the secure storage location. This will not be shared with any other centre staff, even in this situation.
- The Deputy Principal's have the knowledge to perform the duties of the EO however time constraints may prove a barrier and in this case would be supported by the office staff within the centre. Office staff to shadow EO during key tasks in the cycle.
- All exams related material (apart from historically generated entry files) are saved in the following location which is accessible to SLT and admin support staff: MHA Admin \Exams.

## 2. ALS lead/SENCo extended absence at key points in the exam process (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 other criteria identified

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

The centre will:

Medeshamstede Academy is a small SEND school with no more than 26 students in examination years. The DP's and AP's are involved in the individual pathway coordination of the candidates and therefore is in a position to ensure that the above points would have little impact and can be overcome in the absence of SENCO. A plan detailing access and assessment needs for each pupil will have been recorded as part of EHCP reviews in year 9.

- Due to the needs of the students and the support they require whilst working we are heavily staffed with learning support who will have the knowledge to inform the EO of the required entry information.

### **3. Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam process (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

Other criteria:

No other criteria identified

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

The centre will:

- A detailed timeline is produced with all exams and internal assessment deadlines for moderation and Non Examination assessments which is shared with SLT and all staff.
- The Trust would ensure specialist subject teaching is covered by suitable staff to ensure continuity of teaching course content.
- As we are a part of a multi academy trust with various other academies registered as exam centres who also have staff delivering the same courses, therefore the continued delivery of the course and internal assessments can be supported by bringing in staff from other GAT academies.

### **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 other criteria identified

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

The centre will:

- The centre does not plan to recruit external invigilators due to the nature of our candidates, taking their major need of ASD into consideration.
- The centre has a high number of learning support staff who will be our main staffing resource for invigilation for exams and to deliver access arrangements where required.
- The centre will hold invigilator training using approved Exams Office modules as necessary in each season as it is likely that all students will require a form of access arrangement. Also this is to ensure that the whole team have a comprehensive knowledge of the process and the plans for our centre as the candidates will be split up in to separate rooms/small groups/individuals for invigilation, depending on their arrangements.
- On the morning of each exam day a staff briefing will take place with DP & EO to ensure that everyone involved has the chance to ask questions around their role or the centre's arrangements for the exams, taking in to account any last minute personnel changes that may occur.
- Staff from other local centres within the Academy chain can be brought in to support the invigilation in the event of extreme staff shortage.
- EO and Deputy Principal of school receive training and disseminate this using Exams office supporting materials and could deliver this to other staff prior to the examinations.

Academy office staff also have full invigilator training to enable high absence to be covered in an emergency.

## 5. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venue(s) 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

Other criteria:

Not Applicable

### 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 venue details:

- The centre could apply to the JCQ in advance to use an alternative site such as another Academy within the GAT group or the shared sports hall (shared with centre ref 22378)
- Planned trips, group activities for other year groups may be put into place for summer term to release rooms for exams.
- New additional AP space can also be used for exams.
- Mini bus would be used to ensure transporting of pupils was done with JCQ regulations in place with EO/DP supporting.
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or venue
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue

Communication details:

- Parents would be contacted directly by phone and also with an email to explain the contingency plan.

- Each candidate has a letter in the term prior to the exam series outlining summer exam, dates and times.
- 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:

Not Applicable

## 6. Cyber-attack

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Other criteria:

No other criteria identified

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

The centre will:

Centre Services for the relevant Examination boards would allow downloads of Examination papers through secure portals. EO 'checks in' examination papers up to a week prior to examinations therefore would chase any missing papers required.

## 7. Failure of IT systems

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

- MIS/IT system failure at final entry deadline
- MIS/IT system failure during exams preparation
- 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:

- The centre's server based so can be accessed from any location with GAT network access. Therefore in any of these situations above the EO could relocate to an alternative Academy within the Greenwood Academies Trust, and be supported by the central team.
- The EO could use alternative systems such as MS Excel could be used to manually collate, record and distribute results.
- EO downloads result form individual Exam bards due to small numbers so can access form anywhere with internet connection.

## 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:

No other actions identified.

## 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:

- The academy would inform all parents involved in the exams and assessment cycle through Group Call and by letter.
- 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:

- Where there is disruption to teaching time and students miss teaching and learning, the centre will do its utmost to continue to prepare students, as usual, for examinations.
- In the case of modular courses, the centre may advise candidates to sit examinations in the next available series
- Should the centre be closed for an extended period of time, learning could still take place in an alternative GAT academy, or in some cases tuition in the home could be provided by teachers and learning support staff.

## 10. Candidates at risk of being unable to take examinations - centre remains open

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Candidates at risk of being unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal

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:

Not Applicable

- 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:

- Wherever possible the examinations will be conducted according to the centre's published examination timetable.
- The centre will communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue. The centre to communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issue.
- The centre will consider every solution possible and reasonable to continue to enable candidates to sit the examination whilst weighing up the anxiety and stress caused to them should unplanned changes to expected routines occur, as due to the candidates SEN, this may overall become too distressing for them and sitting examinations in such circumstances would not be beneficial for them in any way.

## 11. Centre at risk of being 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 at risk of being unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations

Other criteria:

No other criteria identified

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

The centre will:

- 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
- 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 venue details:

- As part of multi academy trust we would endeavour to use nearest local school facilities to enable examinations to take place.

Communication details:

- The parents would be phoned but also text/emailed communications to update next steps and alternative plans.
- If conditions are so severe that a decision is made to close the academy, or where the academy remains open but some individual candidates are unable to reach it because of extreme weather conditions, and no alternative arrangements can be made to take the examination at a different location, then the options are:
  - Where candidates are entered for examinations but this is not their terminal (final) examination series, they may be entered again for the next series.
    - Where candidates are sitting units as part of their terminal examination series or no further re-sit opportunity is available, then an application for Special Consideration may be made.
    - At all times the Academy shall communicate regularly with candidates and parents/guardians to ensure that candidates anxiety levels are not unnecessarily increase.
  - 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 actions identified

## 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:

No other criteria identified.

### 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. Disruption to transporting 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 identified.

#### **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 bodies arrange collections, contact the relevant awarding bodies for advice and instructions and will not make its own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding body
- for any examinations where the centre makes its own collection arrangements, investigate alternative options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ publication 'Instructions for Conducting Examinations'
- ensure the secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection

Other centre actions:

- In such cases the centre will communicate with the relevant awarding organisations to devise alternative delivery of papers, the solution will depend upon the specifics of the occurrence.

### **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 identified.

#### **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:

No other actions identified

### **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 identified.

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

The centre will:

- make arrangements to access its results at an alternative venue/share facilities with another centre if this is possible, in agreement with the relevant awarding body
- make arrangements to coordinate access to post results services from an alternative venue

Alternative venue details:

- In such cases the centre will communicate with the relevant awarding organisations to devise alternative delivery of options, the solution will depend upon the specifics of the occurrence.
- The centre's systems are server based and therefore secure communication to candidates of the results could be managed from any facility with internet access, be that another Academy within the GAT group, the head office or a residential location.

- 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:

- The EO/SLT would contact all year 11 candidates by phone/text informing them of the situation and solutions.

Other centre actions:

No other actions identified.

## 16. Any other cause of disruption to the exam process

### **Cause of disruption**

No further causes identified

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

Not Applicable

## CHANGES 2022/2023

(Added) Under **Purpose of the plan**: new heading 'Operating across more than one centre' and field for completion

(Added) Under **Possible causes of disruption to the exam process**: new cause '6. Cyber-attack' and fields for completion. This means that causes 6-15, have now changed to causes 7-16

(Added) Under cause 11. **Centre at risk of being 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)**: new field for completion 'Alternative venue details'

(Amended/added) Under **Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning**: guidance and links to current information

## CENTRE-SPECIFIC CHANGES

Not applicable

# Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

## 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**

(updated 30 September 2021)

### Contingency planning

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

#### General contingency guidance

- **emergency planning and response** ([www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings)) from the Department for Education in England
- **school organisation: local-authority-maintained schools** from the Department for Education in England ([www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools))
- **exceptional closure days** ([www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days)) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- **checklist - exceptional closure of schools** ([www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools)) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- **school terms and school closures** from NI Direct ([www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/school-terms-and-school-closures](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/school-terms-and-school-closures))
- **opening schools in extremely bad weather** (<https://gov.wales/opening-schools-extremely-bad-weather-guidance-schools>) - guidance for schools from the Welsh Government
- **bomb threats** procedures for handling bomb threats from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office ([www.gov.uk/government/publications/crowded-places-guidance/bomb-threats](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/crowded-places-guidance/bomb-threats))

#### 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 the JQC Joint Contingency Plan for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland ([www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents/jcq-joint-contingency-plan/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents/jcq-joint-contingency-plan/))

#### Steps you should take

##### 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.

##### 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 JQC's 'Centre emergency evacuation procedure' ([www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations/)).
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.

##### 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.

#### Steps the awarding organisation should take

##### Exam planning

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

##### In the event of disruption

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

##### After the exam

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

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

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

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

See also JCQ's guidance on special considerations ([www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-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 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.

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

The governments' view across England, Wales and Northern Ireland is education should continue in 2021 to 2022 with schools remaining open and that examinations and assessments will go ahead in both autumn 2021 and summer 2022.

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, with any further relevant links, should national disruption occur.

JCQ guidance taken directly from **Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2022-2023** ([www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice—instructions-for-conducting-examinations/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice—instructions-for-conducting-examinations/)) section 15, **Contingency planning**

15.1 The qualification regulators, awarding bodies and government departments responsible for education have prepared and agreed information for schools and colleges in the event of examinations being seriously disrupted. This jointly agreed information will ensure consistency of response in the event of major disruption to the examinations system affecting significant numbers of candidates.

Further information may be found at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland)

15.2 In addition, awarding bodies have their own well-established contingency plans in place to respond to disruptions. It is important that exams officers who are facing disruption liaise directly with the relevant awarding body/bodies.

15.3 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 'contingency days' for examinations, summer 2023. This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document *Examssystem contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland* - [www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland)

The designation of 'contingency days' 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 that there is national disruption to a day of examinations in summer 2023, the awarding bodies will liaise with the qualification regulators and government departments to agree the most appropriate option for managing the impact. As a last resort the affected examinations will be rescheduled. Although every effort would be taken to keep the impact to a minimum, it is possible that there could be more than one timetable date affected following the disruption, up to and including the last contingency day. Centres will be alerted if it was agreed to reschedule the examinations and the affected candidates will be expected to make themselves available in such circumstances. The decision regarding the re-scheduling 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 the contingency arrangements so that they may take them 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.

#### Links to other JCQ documentation

JCQ **Joint Contingency Plan** - [jqc.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents](http://jqc.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents)

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

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

General Regulations for Approved Centres - [jqc.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations](http://jqc.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations)

Guidance notes on alternative site arrangements - [jqc.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms](http://jqc.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms)

Guidance notes for transferred candidates - [jqc.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms](http://jqc.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms)

Instructions for conducting examinations - [jqc.org.uk/exams-office/ice—instructions-for-conducting-examinations](http://jqc.org.uk/exams-office/ice—instructions-for-conducting-examinations)

A guide to the special consideration process - [jqc.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance](http://jqc.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance)

#### GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response: Exam and assessment disruption - [gov.uk/guidance//publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings](http://gov.uk/guidance//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 - [gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service)

## Wales

School closures: examinations - [gov.wales/school-closures-examinations](https://www.gov.wales/school-closures-examinations)

Opening schools in extremely bad weather: guidance for schools - [gov.wales/opening-schools-extremely-bad-weather-guidance-schools](https://www.gov.wales/opening-schools-extremely-bad-weather-guidance-schools)

## Northern Ireland

(updated 2021/22) Exceptional closure days - [education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days)

Checklist - exceptional closure of schools - [education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools)

## ProtectUK

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

## National Cyber Security Centre

The NCSC's free **Web Check** ([ncsc.gov.uk/information/web-check](https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/information/web-check)) and **Mail Check** ([ncsc.gov.uk/information/mailcheck](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 ([ncsc.gov.uk/blog-post/cyber-tools-for-uk-schools](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 ([ncsc.gov.uk/news/alert-targeted-ransomware-attacks-on-uk-education-sector](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 ([ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/mitigating-malware-and-ransomware-attacks](https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/mitigating-malware-and-ransomware-attacks))
3. Offline backups in an online world ([ncsc.gov.uk/blog-post/offline-backups-in-an-online-world](https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/blog-post/offline-backups-in-an-online-world))
4. Backing up your data ([ncsc.gov.uk/collection/small-business-guide/backing-your-data](https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/collection/small-business-guide/backing-your-data))
5. Practical resources to help improve your cyber security ([gov.uk/section/education-skills/cyber-security-schools](https://www.gov.uk/section/education-skills/cyber-security-schools))
6. Building Resilience: Ransomware and the risks to schools and ways to prevent it ([com/watch?v=FppzWedY0ic&t=237s](https://www.com/watch?v=FppzWedY0ic&t=237s))
7. School staff offered training to help shore up cyber defences - NCSC.GOV.UK ([gov.uk/news/school-staff-offered-training-to-help-cyber-defences](https://www.gov.uk/news/school-staff-offered-training-to-help-cyber-defences))