



Exam contingency plan

2018/19

These procedures are reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Date of next review	

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Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at Ninestiles School, An 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 *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*.

This plan also confirms Ninestiles School, An Academy is compliant with the JCQ regulation (section 5.3, *General Regulations for Approved Centres 2018-2019*) 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 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

- ▶ Head of Centre to appoint member of administrative staff to take over responsibilities should absence of EO have the potential to affect the meeting of deadlines
- ▶ Staff member to work closely with EO to ensure they are up to date with the exam cycle and responsibilities at each point in time. This will be done under the supervision of the Vice Principal responsible for exams and Head of Centre
- ▶ Exams Officer to ensure essential information is available
- ▶ Exams Officer to ensure Exam Cycle, policies and procedures are up to date at all times
- ▶ Extra help could be sought by networking with staff from other local centres.
- ▶ Refer to www.theexamsoffice.org for detailed instructions on all exam procedures. (A Valuable source of information)
- ▶ Always report long term absence to the Exam Boards and so they are aware of the situation. They are quite often prepared to help and can be flexible with deadlines etc in these circumstances.

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 of centre responsible for ensuring position is filled should absence have the potential to disrupt exam preparation
- ▶ Head of centre to appoint/employ qualified assessor to test candidates
- ▶ Exam Assessor/Exam Officer to ensure access arrangements are in place by the Spring term of Year 10 for all students where possible
- ▶ Exam Officer and Inclusion Administrator to plan access arrangements for exam days in advance of the Summer series, in consultation with SENCo

3. 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

- ▶ Exam Officer responsible for ensuring deadlines are met for estimated entries. Any omissions to be referred to Head of Centre
 - Amendments can always be made at a later date to confirm final entries
- ▶ Exam Officer to liaise with 2nd in Department/SLT
- ▶ Head of Centre responsible for ensuring the priority for teaching is the examination cohort and staff will be covered in good time, by trained professionals, in all circumstances
- ▶ Hire subject specialist supply staff, as required
- ▶ Subject Lead/Head of Faculty should take responsibility for any missing entries, coursework marks and any assessment marks in the absence of a member of teaching staff.
- ▶ Head of Department to ensure key roles are covered by other department staff

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

- ▶ EO responsible for recruitment of invigilators in the Autumn term of the Summer series.
 - Advance planning required to ensure enough are available for the sittings
 - Head of Centre to be informed if recruitment necessary
- ▶ Minor absence issues (such as an invigilator calling in sick) can be covered by another invigilator from the pool.
 - Identify invigilators that can work at short notice
- ▶ Cover supervisor, support and administration staff also to receive exam invigilator training to ensure back up is available in case of invigilator absence
- ▶ Check with covers staff to see if there is anyone available
- ▶ Check if there is any teacher that has not been used from that teaching period
- ▶ Retain contact information for temp agencies who can provide trained invigilators

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

- ▶ EO responsible for ensuring planning of rooms is completed by the end of the Spring term to identify potential rooming issues
- ▶ Alternative venues within the school to be made available by teaching staff in the event of an unexpected incident
- ▶ Head of Centre to liaise with EO to ensure no disruption due to room shortages

- ▶ The default exams rooms are: Sports Hall, Gym, Drama 1, Training Room and Conference Room. Other rooms as IT suites and PB block can be used, if required.
- ▶ Reseat examinations, if possible, to reduce the number of rooms that are required.
- ▶ Room bookings must be made early enough in advance to ensure there are sufficient rooms available
- ▶ If there is an emergency on the day, there three meeting rooms by reception that could be used.
- ▶ If all students are in exams at any one time, then the rooms used by that Year group in that period, should be free and can be booked for exams.
- ▶ If no possibility of any free rooms, refer to SLT for advice

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

- ▶ All Exam entries should be made well in advance of the deadline to avoid this issue in the first place.
- ▶ EO to contact awarding bodies directly to arrange alternative methods of information exchange
 - Extension might be granted by awarding bodies
- ▶ Head of Centre to be informed
- ▶ Ensure two back-up devices (at least one laptop outside of school) is regularly updated
- ▶ Ensure availability of tech support staff during key dates
 - Ensure IT department are available to ensure smooth running of downloads.
- ▶ Try to access MIS through another computer i.e. from home, or another user

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

- ▶ Ensure students and parents/carers are notified as soon as possible
- ▶ Liaise with Head of Centre to ensure that students can proceed with their exam as soon as possible
- ▶ Invigilators to be trained in the centre's lockdown procedures
- ▶ EO to ensure a written lockdown procedure is in each exam room
- ▶ EO to liaise with SLT/invigilators where safe/possible

8. Disruption of teaching time – 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

- ▶ Head of Centre responsible for finding alternative venues/methods of learning
- ▶ Exam Officer to contact relevant awarding bodies of the situation
 - Approval from awarding body needed before any action is taken
- ▶ Examination classes are prioritised for teaching
- ▶ Where there is disruption to teaching time and students miss teaching and learning, teachers should think of alternative methods to prepare students, as usual, for examinations.
- ▶ The centre to communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this.
- ▶ Invigilators to be informed of the arrangements
- ▶ In extreme circumstances advise candidates they may need to sit exams in the next available series.

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

- ▶ Procedures for absence outlined to students in Examination Handbook
- ▶ Exams Officer to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue.
- ▶ Exams Officer to liaise with student and parents to find alternative venue/advise on next opportunity to sit the examination/apply for special consideration as required
- ▶ Centre to open for examinations and examination candidates only, if possible.
- ▶ Centre to use alternative venues in agreement with relevant awarding organisations (e.g. share facilities with other centres or use other public building, if possible)
- ▶ Centre may offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series.
- ▶ Centre to apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements

10. Centre unable to open as normal during the exams 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

- ▶ Open for exam candidates only if possible
- ▶ Examination Boards are contacted immediately
- ▶ Use alternative venue, in agreement with awarding bodies
 - Possible venues to include Summit Learning Trust Secondary Schools – Lyndon School and Cockshut Hill School
- ▶ Offer students the opportunity to sit the next series if applicable
- ▶ Details to be communicated to candidates via the school's website, email and text facilities. Staff involved in exams (including invigilators) would be contacted by email, telephone and text.

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 or in case of discrepancies
- ▶ If this happens on the day of the exam, contact the Exam Boards immediately. Awarding organisations to provide centres with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network.

12. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- ▶ Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ In the first instance centres to seek advice from awarding organisations and normal collection agency regarding collection. Ninestiles School should not to make their own arrangements for transportation without approval from awarding organisations.
- ▶ Centre must ensure secure storage of completed examination papers until collection.
- ▶ All exams scripts must be stored in the secure Exams Office

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ EO to communicate with awarding bodies immediately
- ▶ Examination Board instructions are distributed to the Exams Officer, Head of Department, Parents and Pupils
- ▶ Awarding organisations to generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding organisations
- ▶ Candidates offered the opportunity to retake in subsequent series if possible
- ▶ Regular update to learners and parents

14. Centre unable to distribute results as normal (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

- ▶ The Examination Boards are contacted immediately by the Exams Officer and advice is sought and acted upon
- ▶ Arrange to access results at an alternative site.
- ▶ Inform staff, students and parents as soon as possible of the change in distribution of results.
- ▶ Centre to make arrangements to coordinate access to post results services from an alternative site
- ▶ Centre to share facilities with other centres if this is possible.

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 as part of your emergency planning and make sure your staff are aware of these plans.

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

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

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.
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

Establish and maintain, and at all times comply with, an up-to-date, written contingency plan.

Ensure that the arrangements in place with centres and other third parties enable them to deliver and award qualifications in accordance with their conditions of recognition.

4.2 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.

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](#)
- [FAB'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

In the event of widespread sustained national disruption, the 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.

[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 23 January 2018) <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 have designated **Wednesday 26 June 2019** as a 'contingency day' for examinations. This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland - [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/examsystem-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/examsystem-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland)

ireland

The designation of a 'contingency day' within the common examination timetable is in the event of national or local disruption to examinations. It is part of the awarding bodies' standard contingency planning for examinations.

Centres must therefore remind candidates that they must remain available until Wednesday 26 June 2019 should an awarding body need to invoke its contingency plan.

[JCQ guidance taken directly from JCQ *Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2018-2019*

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

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

Guidance on *Alternative Site* arrangements and *Transferred Candidate* arrangements

Accessed through secure login to the Centre Admin Portal (CAP) or through the JCQ training site

<http://jqc.training.jcq.org.uk/CAP/Home/Training>

Instructions for Conducting Examinations <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>

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

GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response: Severe weather; Exam disruption

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings>

Teaching time lost due to severe weather conditions

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-time-lost-due-to-severe-weather-conditions>

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>

Statutory guidance on school closures <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools>

Wales

School closures – opening schools in extreme bad weather

<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/schoolclosuresfaq/?lang=en>

Northern Ireland

Exceptional closure days <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days>

Checklist for Principals when considering Opening or Closure of School <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools>

School closures <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/school-closures>