



ORMISTON  
SIX VILLAGES  
ACADEMY



# EXAM CONTINGENCY PLAN 2023-2024

Approved by the Principal: October 2023  
Date of next review: October 2024

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

## Key staff involved in the plan

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	<b>Paul Slaughter</b>
Exams officer (Senior leader)	<b>Teresa Hardman</b>
SENCo	<b>Emma Barber</b>
Senior leader(s)	<b>Joshua Case</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 Ormiston Six Villages Academy. By outlining actions/procedures to be invoked in case of disruption it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on our exam process.

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by the [Ofqual 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 Ormiston Six Villages Academy's compliance with JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres** (section 5.3) that the centre has in place:

- This plan also confirms Ormiston Six Villages Academy is compliant with the JCQ regulation (section 5.3, *General Regulations for Approved Centres 2022-2023* 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.* The examination contingency plan should reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations, or on results day, owing to an unforeseen emergency. The potential impact of a cyber-attack should also be considered.

## Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

### 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
- 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

- Exam's officer to ensure that time line for all data returns, entries, and correspondence with exam boards is clearly outlined and shared with SLT line manager at the start of the academic year. Any updates to this timeline should be shared at regular line management meetings.
- Exam plan to be shared with SLT manager.
- In the event of the exam officer's absence for any extended period, admin cover to be provided internally with the oversight of the SLT line manager.
- Invigilators and other members of the admin team to be trained in the proper practice of dispatching exam scripts.
- Access to and instruction for the collection of results to be shared with the SLT line manager and kept in written form by head of centre.
- Seating plans folder to be shared with SLT.
- All staff that provide reception cover are briefed on the procedure for the arrival of exam papers.

Two members of staff have the key for the paper's cupboard. They are the exams officer and premises manager.

## **2. ALS lead/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

- ALS Lead/SENCo begins assessing students for potential access arrangements at the beginning of year 10.
- ALS Lead/SENCo/SENCo Assistant collates relevant information.
- Educational Psychologist employed in ALS/SENCo's absence
- Exams Officer to gain approval for access arrangements based on ALS Lead//SENCo/Ed. Psych Form 8 reports
- Exams Officer to check with ALS Lead/SENCo/SENCo Assistant well before deadline regarding potential modified paper requirements.
- Staff providing support to access arrangement candidates are provided and trained by Exams Officer.
- Exams Officer makes all arrangements for access arrangement candidates.

### 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

- Heads of departments will ensure that this is carried out properly by staff covering lessons in the event of teacher absence or by themselves if needed.
- Exams Officer submits early/estimated entry information to awarding bodies based on subject/class lists and knowledge of syllabus.
- Exams Officer to request final entry information well in advance of entry deadline to allow time for any possible delays.

In the event of HoD absence the SLT line manager will undertake oversight of this area with the support of the exams officer.

### 4. SLT (Exams) extended absence at key points in the exams cycle

#### Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Assistant Principal with responsibility for exams absent during examination season.

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

- Exams officer to report to the Principal
- In the absence of the Principal, Exams officer will report to the Vice Principal
- Assistant Principals to provide SLT support to Exams if Principal or Vice are absent

### 5. 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

- Centre recruits and trains invigilators on an on-going basis
- A number of core services staff are annually and can deputise when the need arises
- Teachers of other subject areas to be used as a last resort.

## 6. 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

- Rooming plan to be drawn up in advance of all exams and shared with SLT.
- Exams Officer will advise SLT well in advance of any issues with rooming exams allowing alternative venue's to be allocated to exams.
- If main venue and/or alternative venues are unavailable at short notice, candidates to be split between alternative rooms and additional invigilators deployed.

## 7. Cyber-attack

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

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

- Awarding bodies to be advised immediately
- SLT to be advised immediately
- Exams staff to work from home using secure sites to manage entries/amendments.
- Results statements to be obtained directly from awarding bodies to ensure timely release to students.
- Use of alternative site/IT system if required.

## 8. 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

- Centre to submit all exam entries 1 week prior to deadline to allow time to deal with any potential issues.
- Exam preparation is carried out over a 2 month period prior to exam season. MIS failure to be dealt with by in-house ICT Technicians, ensuring that any system failure would not affect ability to conduct exams.
- Statements of result can be obtained directly from awarding bodies and prepared for students on 'download' day ensuring that students receive results on the designated day.
- If necessary, downloading of results statements to be carried out on alternative IT system/site.
- Results statistics preparation would be carried out on the re-instatement of the MIS system.

## 9. 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

- Centre to advise all awarding bodies of the issue immediately
- The SLT will arrange alternative accommodation for exam to continue if needed (alternative site arrangement application)

- Centre to advise parents/carers of alternative arrangements by text/email
- Centre to keep website updated
- Centre to apply for special consideration for affected students.

#### **10. 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 SLT will arrange alternative accommodation to function as a school and where there is disruption to teaching time and students the centre will ensure all students are prepared as usual for their exams.
- Where there is disruption to teaching time and students miss teaching and learning, it remains the responsibility of the centre to prepare students, as usual, for examinations. Centre is able to offer online learning.
- Communication sent to parents, carers and students.
- Centre to keep website update
- Centre to apply for special consideration where appropriate

#### **11. Candidates at risk of being unable to take examinations – 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

- Centre to advise awarding bodies of the issue immediately.
- Arrangements to be made for sitting the exam at other centres where appropriate. This would be **Eastergate Village Hall, Barnham Road, Eastergate, PO20 3RP**.
- If a student does not turn up for an exam – a telephone call will be made home. Students can be admitted into the exams room up to 1 hour after published start of exam when the exam is over 1 hr duration. If they cannot attend the exam, students can be given the opportunity to sit the exam at the next available series and/or special consideration can be applied if the adverse circumstances are beyond their control and if the student has met the minimum requirements.
- If a student turns up who has not been entered – check with HoD. Find a paper, seat them, amend attendance list and make entry.
- If a student is entered for the wrong paper – HoD contacted to confirm error. Contact awarding Body for copy of paper if necessary. Provide exam paper, seat, amend entry and mark present on attendance register.
- If a student is taken ill during an exam – Invigilator to contact Exams Officer immediately. Exams Officer/First Aid to attend to student. Special consideration for the student, to be completed with 7 days of the exam.
- Communication sent to parents, carers and students.
- Centre to apply for special consideration as appropriate.



## 12. 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

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

- Centre to advise awarding bodies immediately.
- The SLT will arrange alternative suitable accommodation if required. This would be **Eastergate Village Hall, Barnham Road, Eastergate, PO20 3RP**.
- If there is a power cut – Site Manager and ICT Manager informed as soon as possible. If possible, re-room the exam to rooms with power. Start the exam late with JCQ regulations if power is restored. Special consideration to be applied for if external examinations cannot take place. To be completed within 7 days of the exam.
- In the event of adverse weather and the school is closed on the day of a scheduled public examination – the Head of Centre will assess the possibility of key staff being able to attend. If they are confident that key staff are able to be in attendance and that the exam will run. The school website will be updated to show timetabled examinations are still going ahead and advising of any revised start times. Start times may be delayed for morning exams if a number of candidates are late (permission will be sought from relevant awarding bodies). All candidates are expected to make the effort to come in and sit their examination. The decisions regarding travelling to school for an exam rest with individual families taking consideration of the weather and road conditions locally to them. If a candidate is unable to get into school on an exam day as a result of inclement weather, it is imperative that families contact the school as soon as possible to explain that this has occurred. If the head teacher were to take a decision that the school has to close, as it is unsafe to open, the exam board would be notified that the exam scheduled for that day were unable to run.
- Communication sent to parents, carers and students.
- Centre to apply for special consideration if appropriate.

## 13. 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

- Centre to liaise with all awarding bodies to organise alternative delivery of papers.
- Awarding bodies to provide centre with electronic access to exam papers via secure external network.
- Centre to ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions.
- Awarding bodies to provide guidance on the conduct of exams in these circumstances.
- Awarding bodies to consider rescheduling of exam to alternative date/time as a last resort.

## 14. Disruption to transporting completed examination scripts

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

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

- Contact board and if examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding bodies arrange collections, we would seek advice from the relevant awarding bodies for advice and instructions and not make our own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding body.

- For an examination where we make our own collection arrangements, we would investigate alternative options that comply with the requirements published in the JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations.
- Scripts will be kept in secure storage units until collection.

### **15. 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

- Head of Centre to inform awarding bodies immediately.
- Parents/carers of affected students will be contacted.
- Awarding bodies to generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding bodies.
- Where marks cannot be generated by awarding bodies candidates may need to retake affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series.

### **16. 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

- Centre to contact awarding bodies regarding alternative options.
- Centre to access results from alternative site (agreement from awarding bodies required)
- Students results statements to be downloaded directly from awarding bodies.
- Centre to coordinate post results services/requests from alternative site organised by the SLT/Head of Centre.
- Centre to advise students, parents/carers of alternative site arrangements by text/email.
- Centre to keep website update.

## 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

#### **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:

#### **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

#### **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 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.

##### ***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***

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

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

### ***In the event of disruption***

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](#)

### ***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.

(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 30 September 2021)

<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, 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: <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 2022. 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 2022, 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 2021-2022** <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>, section 15, Contingency planning)

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

This Notice is based on guidance provided within the JCQ Joint Contingency Plan, which is available from the JCQ website: [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)

In the event of widespread disruption to the examination system, all centres **must** have contingency plans in place. There are three main categories of disruption, which are outlined below.

### **Candidates at risk of being unable to take examinations – centres remain open**

Centres' contingency plans should focus on options that enable candidates to take their examinations. As part of these preparations, centres should take into account the guidance provided in the JCQ publication Instructions for conducting examinations: <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>

- consider moving the starting times of the examination for all candidates (see **section 6.2** of the JCQ publication Instructions for conducting examinations)
- being aware of the rules for very late arrivals (see **section 21** of the JCQ publication Instructions for conducting examinations).

Wherever possible, it is always in the best interest for candidates to sit the examination. However, if candidates who are unable to sit the examination meet the criteria, special consideration through absence for acceptable reasons is an option (see **Chapter 4** of the JCQ publication A guide to the special consideration process: <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance>)

Please do not hesitate to call the relevant awarding body if you require additional support or guidance in the event of disruption to examinations.

### **Centres at risk of being unable to open as normal during the examination period**

As above, centres' contingency plans must focus on enabling candidates to take their examinations if the centre is at risk of being unable to open as normal.

The responsibility for deciding whether it is safe for a centre to open lies with the head of centre who is responsible for taking advice or following instructions from relevant local or national agencies.

Information on what centres should do if examinations or other assessments are seriously disrupted can be found in the three country regulators' exam system contingency plan:

**[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](http://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)**

Special consideration through absence for acceptable reasons is also available as an option if all other avenues have been exhausted and candidates meet the relevant criteria.

Please do not hesitate to call the relevant awarding body if you require additional support or guidance in the event of disruption to your examinations.

### **Disruption to transporting completed examination scripts**

If there is a delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts:



- where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding bodies arrange collections, centres should **contact the relevant awarding bodies** for advice and instructions.
- for examinations where centres make their own collection arrangements, they should **investigate alternative options** that comply with the JCQ publication Instructions for conducting examinations
- completed scripts **must** be stored securely until they are collected.

### **Summary of centre and awarding body responsibilities**

Examination centres are responsible for:

- preparing plans for any disruption to examinations as part of centres' general emergency planning • deciding whether the centre can open for examinations as scheduled and informing relevant awarding bodies if the centre is unable to open
- exploring the opportunities for alternative arrangements if the centre cannot open for examinations and agreeing such arrangements with the awarding bodies
- judging whether candidates meet the requirements for special consideration because of any disruption and submitting these requests to the relevant awarding bodies
- assessing their circumstances and liaising with awarding bodies in the event of disruption to the transportation of papers.

Awarding bodies are responsible for:

- ensuring centres receive examination materials for scheduled examinations
- advising centres on possible alternative examination arrangements and declining/approving proposals for alternative examination arrangements
- evaluating and declining/approving requests for special consideration.

### **Contacting the awarding bodies**

In all cases, if there are any concerns, please contact the relevant awarding body for advice:

#### **AQA**

0800 197 7162

[eos@aqa.org.uk](mailto:eos@aqa.org.uk)

#### **CCEA**

028 9026 1212, 028 9026 1293, 028 9026 1425

[centresupport@ccea.org.uk](mailto:centresupport@ccea.org.uk)

#### **OCR**

01223 553998

[support@ocr.org.uk](mailto:support@ocr.org.uk)

#### **Pearson**

0344 463 2535

#### **WJEC**

02920 265 077

[exams@wjec.co.uk](mailto:exams@wjec.co.uk)

(JCQ guidance above taken directly from the notice - **Preparing for disruption to examinations** effective from 11 October 2021 [www.jcq.org.uk/preparing-for-disruption-to-examinations/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/preparing-for-disruption-to-examinations/))

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

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

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

Instructions for Conducting Examinations [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations)

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

## **GOV.UK**

Emergency planning and response: Severe weather; Exam disruption; Coronavirus (COVID-19)  
[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)

School organisation: 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>

## **Wales**

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

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

## **Northern Ireland**

Exceptional closure days [www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days)

Checklist for Principals when considering Opening or Closure of School - 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)

## **National Counter Terrorism Security Office**

Guidance - Bomb Threats [www.gov.uk/government/publications/crowded-places-guidance/bomb-threats](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/crowded-places-guidance/bomb-threats)