



The Market Weighon School

Exam Contingency Policy

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Purpose of the Plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at The Market Weighton School. 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 Examinations**

This plan details how The Market Weighton School complies with the JCQ's General Regulations for Approved Centres, by having in place for inspection which must be reviewed and updated annually, a written contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination/assessment administration and delivery.

Possible Causes of disruption to the exam process

Exam Officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (Including absence on exam days)

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 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 examinations results affecting the distribution of results to candidates
- The facilitation of the post-results services

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Exams assistant (Jayne Mason and/or Jacqui Wood) to perform all tasks. SLT to also nominate a 'deputy' to cover the role/task if exams assistant is also absent
- 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
- Always report long term absence to the Exam Boards so they are aware of the situation. They are quite often prepared to help and can be flexible with deadlines etc. in these circumstances

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 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 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
- Access arrangements unable to be implemented due to having no approval as EAA not applied for

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Continual liaison required with the SEN department
- Request SEND Manager (Louise Nelson) and KS4 Lead (Roxanne Spencer) take over until SENCO returns
- KS4 Lead to identify any candidates not yet approved by awarding organisations
- Exams Officer/assistant to help SEND Manager and/or KS4 Lead with online access arrangement applications
- Exams Officer to identify any shortfalls for invigilation for students with access arrangements

- Awarding organisations to be contacted if further advice is required

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 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 decision 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

- Subject Lead Teachers or HoD to ensure Exams Officer receives details of final entries, provide coursework marks and samples to be posted
- Exams Officer must liaise with the above and inform them of deadlines
- SLT to intervene if necessary
- Exams Officer to print out all relevant instructions with paperwork
- Awarding organisation to be contacted if required
- Supply teachers may have to be brought in to assist in teaching and learning

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

- Conduct meetings and set up training annually
- A summary produced pre-exam series to determine the invigilator numbers required, therefore identifying in advance any shortfalls
- Cover supervisor/support staff will act as an additional invigilator in the event of a shortfall at short notice
- Exams Officer to maintain a panel of suitable invigilators

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

- Identify spare classrooms and have an 'available rooms' list prepared
- The offices in the admin department can be used
- Move pupils from normal classrooms for the duration of the examinations
- Plan alternative accommodation for the duration of the incident
- Split students into two groups. One group will sit the exam whilst group 2 is supervised in the canteen. These students must not be allowed to use mobile phones or leave the room without supervision. There is no need to complete paperwork and prior permission from the Awarding Organisations is not required

Cyber Security

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- All exam entries should be made well in advance of the deadline
- Awarding organisations to be informed of the situation and an extension to the deadline should be requested
- Entries can be completed online at the relevant awarding organisation. Exams Officer must find access to a computer at another sit
- Arbor – Keystone ICT Support team and ICT Manager on standby to repair damage quickly
- Special consideration can be applied for in the event of a serious disruption
- Results can be obtained at an alternative site
- Ensure that all members of centre staff who access awarding bodies' online systems undertake annual cyber security training
- Developing and maintaining a comprehensive cyber security policy for the centre
- Implementing and enforcing robust security measures, including mandatory MFA for all accounts and systems containing exam-related information to enhance security and protect sensitive data
- Regularly reviewing and updating security settings to align with current best practices;
- Updating passwords that have been exposed
- Setting up secure account recovery points
- Reviewing and managing connected applications
- Monitoring accounts and regularly reviewing account access, including removing access when no longer required
- Ensuring authorised members of staff securely access awarding bodies' online systems in line with awarding body regulations regarding cyber security and the JCQ document Guidance for

centres on cyber security. Authorised staff will have access, where necessary, to a device which complies with awarding bodies' MFA requirements

- Reporting any actual or suspected compromise of an awarding body's online systems immediately to the relevant awarding body

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
- Awarding organisations to be informed of the situation and an extension to the deadline should be requested
- Entries can be completed online at the relevant awarding organisation. Exams officer must find access to a computer at another site.
- Arbor – Keystone ICT support team and ICT team on standby to repair damage quickly
- Special consideration can be applied for in the event of a serious disruption
- Results can be obtained at an alternative site

Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lockdown)

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

Please refer to the centre's lockdown and emergency evacuation (exams) policies, available electronically on Staff Central – Policies

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

- If the centre is closed for an extended period interrupting the normal teaching and learning of candidates, the centre will communicate the details to parents, carers and students and the Local Authority. Arrangements will be made for students to be taught at an alternative school or site.

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

- Response is dependent on the type of issue
- Meet with; Headteacher, SLT, Business Manager, Site Manager and the Exams Officer – Risk assessment must be carried out
- If possible, open the school for exam students only
- Communicate with candidates and parents/carers and invigilators
- Transport arrangements must be made for collecting and for the return of students after the exam has finished
- JCQ guidance on special consideration can be accessed through the JCQ website. Please note: candidates are only eligible for special consideration if they have been fully prepared and have covered the whole course but are affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control

Centre unable to open as normal during the examination period (including in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to 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

- The Awarding organisation must be informed straight away.
- Meeting with the Headteacher; SLT, Business Manager, Site Manager and Exams Officer.
- Safety check will be conducted.
- Awarding organisations will be able to offer advice regarding the alternative arrangements for conducting exams.
- Papers can be downloaded via a secure site with permission from awarding organisations.
- School sports hall or the sports centre could be used if accessible and safe.
- If the above are also out of action we shall identify if the exam can be sat at an alternative site
- Mount Pleasant Junior School / Holme-On-Spalding-Moor Primary school
- Once a decision has been made, all information on TMWS website.
- Students, parents and invigilators to be contacted and informed of the changes.
- Student contact details locked in safe if computers are not available.
- Special Consideration can be used where candidates are unable to achieve a result due to one of the above factors

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

- Awarding organisations to provide us with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network.
- Awarding organisations may be able to fax examination papers if electronic transfer is not possible.
- The Exams Officer would need to ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions.
- Awarding organisations would provide guidance on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances.

- As a last resort, and in close collaboration with centres and regulators, awarding organisations to consider scheduling the examination on an alternative date

Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- In the first instance, seek advice from awarding organisations and contact Parcel Force (the normal collection agency) regarding collection. DO NOT make own arrangements for transportation without approval from awarding organisations.
- Papers must be locked in the exams safe until collection has been arranged.

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

- Exams Officer to send a report to exam board asking for special consideration depending on circumstances

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

- Response is dependent on the type of issue
- Exams Officer to arrange to access school's results at an alternative site
- Results can be downloaded from the awarding organisations if SIMS is not running. Statement of results can be downloaded and printed from the secure site
- Students will be informed of the delay
- Results will be carried out manually and input into excel
- Contact performance team at the LA to explain the situation. The overall results analysis may be late
- Arrangements will be made to coordinate access to post results services from an alternative venue
- Paper copies will be completed and posted to the relevant awarding organisations if electronic versions are not accessible.

Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

Ofqual:

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

1. Contingency planning

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

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

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 ['Centre emergency evacuation procedure'](#).
6. Communicate with parents, carers and students any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.
7. Communicate with any external assessors or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable.

3.3 After the exam

1. Consider whether any students' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration.
2. Advise students, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date.
3. Ensure that scripts are stored under secure conditions.
4. Return scripts to awarding organisation 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](#)

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.

6. Widespread national disruption

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 examinations and assessments, including exam timetables.

In September 2023, Ofqual and the DfE published joint consultation decisions on long-term resilience arrangements. As in 2023, Ofqual has provided guidance on collecting evidence of student performance to ensure resilience in the qualifications system for students entering GCSEs, AS and A levels, the Advanced Extension Award and Project qualifications. For VTQs and other qualifications used alongside or instead of GCSEs, AS and A levels, awarding organisations will provide guidance where needed and will contact schools and colleges with more information.

In December 2022, Qualifications Wales published guidance for contingency assessment arrangements for GCSEs, AS and A levels and Skills Challenge Certificates in the event that a national decision is made to cancel exams. This guidance is still relevant for the current academic year.

The DfE has updated its guidance on handling strike action in schools in England in light of the industrial action in 2023. The guidance recommends schools should prioritise the running of examinations and assessments on any strike days, and should review their contingency plans to make this happen. Schools, colleges and other exam centres must speak to the relevant awarding organisations if they are expecting any disruption that might affect the sitting of exams and assessments.

The DfE has also issued guidance for education settings with confirmed reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) in their buildings. It includes the need for contingencies for possible disruption to examinations and links to the existing emergency planning guidance.

General contingency guidance

- Emergency planning and response for education, childcare and children's social care settings from the DfE in England
- handling strike action in schools from the DfE in England
- school organisation: local-authority-maintained schools from the DfE in England
- reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete: guidance for education settings with confirmed RAAC from the DfE in England
- exceptional closure days: Northern Ireland from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- checklist - exceptional closure of schools from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- school terms and school closures from NI Direct
- opening schools, childcare and play settings in extreme bad weather and extreme hot weather - guidance for schools from the Welsh Government
- emergency planning and response guidance for education and childcare settings- guidance for schools and education settings from the Welsh Government
- protective security and preparedness for education settings from the DfE
- police guidance from National Counter Terrorism Security Office and partners on preparing for threats
- cyber security guidance for schools and colleges from the National Cyber Security Centre"

JCQ

JCQ guidance taken directly from Instructions for conducting examinations 2024-2025 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-englandwales-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 All centres must have a written examination contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to act immediately in the event of an emergency or where the head of centre, examinations officer or SENCo is absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle. The examination contingency plan should reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency. All relevant centre staff must be familiar with the examination contingency 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 centre's contingency plan must be invoked, utilising the centre's alternative site(s) and the relevant awarding bodies 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 sessions' for examinations, summer 2025. This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland - www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland

15.6 The designation of 'contingency sessions' 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.

15.7 In the event that there is national disruption to a day of examinations in summer 2025, 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.

15.8 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."