



Developing Trust, Inspiring Hope, Building Success, Shaping the Future

Rawlins

Examination Contingency Plan

Rawlins, a Church of England Academy has at its heart a distinctive Christian ethos. Based on our Christian foundation and values we seek to promote a culture of developing every person and therefore every school policy is written from this perspective. With a commitment to learning and maturing in the context of the school vision, we lay particular emphasis on the Christian values of compassion, wisdom and endurance for both individuals and as a school community.

Date of review	March 2025
Next review	September 2026
Approval by	Principal Policy shared with the LGC
Review frequency	Annual

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Aims

The aims of this plan are:

- To examine potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the management and administration of exams, including the potential impact of a cyber-attack.
- To mitigate the impact of disruptions by providing actions or procedures to follow.

Legislation and guidance

This plan complies with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) General Regulations for Approved Centres, which require all exam centres to have a written examination contingency plan/examinations policy.

This plan is also informed by the Ofqual Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland. This plan also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

Responsibilities

Head of Centre

The head of centre will ensure that a written examination contingency plan/examinations policy is in place which covers all aspects of examination administration.

Staff and invigilators

Staff and invigilators involved in the centre's exam process are responsible for reading, understanding and implementing the contingency plan.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every year in the autumn term, or well in advance of each exam series. At every review, the policy will be shared with the local governing committee.

Contingency plan

Possible causes of disruption to the exam process and actions that should be taken are detailed in the table below:

Scenario	When to implement	Actions / Mitigation	Person(s) responsible
Exams officer absence (short term or extended absence) at key points in the exam cycle	<p>In the event that the Exams Officer is absence from work in the immediate short term at key points in the exam cycle, or is absence long term.</p> <p>Key points in the cycle relate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Planning stage <i>Collation of qualification details</i> <i>Recruitment of invigilators</i> ● Entries <i>Submitting entries to awarding bodies</i> ● Pre-exams <i>Exam scheduling (rooms/invigilators etc.)</i> <i>Issuing candidate timetables</i> ● Exam time <i>Exam operations (running the exams)</i> ● Results and post-results <i>Downloading/issuing candidate results</i> <i>Dealing with post-result queries/requests</i> 	<p>SLT member temporarily directed by the Head of Centre to assume responsibility for all aspects of the examination process supported by members of the trust data and exams team as required.</p> <p>Seek support and guidance from other exams officers (at other centres) within the trust.</p> <p>Head of centre to allocate or appoint additional support staff to the exams team as appropriate.</p>	Head of Centre to direct other staff members and contact trust exams/data team for additional support.
SENCo extended absence at key points in the exam cycle	<p>In the event that the SENCo is absence from work at key points in the exam cycle.</p> <p>Key points in the cycle relate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Planning stage <i>Candidate testing for access arrangements</i> <i>Evidence of need gathering</i> ● Pre-exams <i>Approval for access arrangements (applications)</i> <i>Staff facilitator training</i> <i>Centre-delegated arrangements put in place</i> 	<p>Teaching Assistants and Exams Officer to work with the Exams Team SLT Line Manager and SENCo SLT Line Manager to identify candidates where applications for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments may be required and make arrangements for testing and applications.</p> <p>The employment of outside agencies/professionals may be required to assist in this process of access arrangement testing.</p> <p>Seek support from other SENCos within the trust as appropriate.</p>	SLT Line Manager for Exam Officer

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exam time <p><i>Access arrangement candidate support</i></p>		
Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle	<p>When teaching staff are absent for a prolonged period thereby affecting non-examination assessment tasks being set/issued/taken by candidates as scheduled and/or internal assessment marks/work not being available for submission to awarding bodies.</p>	<p>Head of centre to employ suitable supply/temporary staff to cover staff absence in the short term ensuring that required assessment tasks are completed.</p> <p>Subject specialists/Directors of learning from the trust to support teaching and learning activities in the absence of the subject teacher and aid in the completion of all assessment activities.</p>	Head of Centre
Disruption of teaching time – centre closed for an extended period	<p>When the centre is closed and candidates are unable to attend for an extended period during normal teaching or supported study time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning.</p>	<p>Seek advice from awarding organisations and JCQ.</p> <p>Communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this.</p> <p>Facilitate alternative methods of learning, alternative venues or both; Head of centre and SLT to work with the trust leadership group to facilitate alternative arrangements (within the trust or in collaboration with other centres) to minimise the impact of lost learning and teaching time.</p> <p>Prioritise candidates who will be facing examinations shortly.</p> <p>Advise candidates, where appropriate, to sit examinations in the next available series.</p>	Head of Centre & SLT Line Manager for Exam Officer
Invigilators shortage; lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence	<p>When the centre fails to recruit and train sufficient invigilators to conduct exams (to meet expected ratios) or there is an invigilator shortage on peak exam days/absence on the day of an exam.</p>	<p>Exams Officer will review the invigilation staffing at the start of each academic year and after making exam entries to ensure sufficient staff are recruited and trained to meet expected ratios working closely with HR teams.</p> <p>HR will be aware of the school staff available for invigilation duties at short notice and for peak exam days (support staff); Exams Officer will coordinate requirements with HR and Exams Team SLT Line Manager to mobilise staff at short notice as needed. Staff will be directed by the Head of Centre. Staff will be trained in advance using the TEO online training modules.</p>	SLT Line Manager for Exam Officer & Exam Officer

Exam rooms shortage; lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice	When it is identified that there are insufficient exam rooms available to accommodate candidates for scheduled public examinations.	<p>Exams Officer will organise rooming for examinations in advance of all examination windows to ensure sufficient time is available to identify appropriate rooms and plan appropriately.</p> <p>In the event of a room not being available at very short notice (or insufficient rooming available), support staff and invigilators will be used to ensure the security of the examination is not compromised whilst alternative rooming is sourced (candidates will be suitably isolated as required).</p> <p>Seek advice from awarding organisations and JCQ Inspection Service; request timetable adjustment if required and operate exams on split timings.</p> <p>Alternative accommodation may be used at a nearby centre (most likely within the trust) and candidates transported as appropriate.</p>	SLT Line Manager for Exam Officer & Exam Officer
Cyber attack	Where it is identified that a cyber attack may compromise any aspect of the delivery of examinations	<p>Exams Officer will work with IT and make contact with the relevant Awarding Body to seek further guidance.</p> <p>Senior Leaders will monitor the situation and take any action required as directed by the Awarding Bodies.</p>	Exam Officer & Director of IT
Failure of IT systems	<p>When the MIS (management information system) or IT network/internet connection fails at key points in the exam cycle.</p> <p>Key points in the cycle relate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Entries <i>Submitting entries to awarding bodies</i> ● Pre-exams <i>Exam scheduling (rooming/candidate seating etc.)</i> <i>Issuing candidate timetables</i> ● Exam time <i>Online examinations</i> ● Results and post-results <i>Downloading and producing results slips</i> 	<p>Exams Officer will make entries from another site direct to the awarding bodies (using awarding bodies' secure extranet sites).</p> <p>Exam room scheduling/timetables complied using alternative methods (alternative software/manual bookings and timetables).</p> <p>Exams Officer will contact awarding bodies in respect of re-sitting online exams affected by system failure, or to seek an alternative solution.</p> <p>Results accessed directly from the awarding bodies' secure extranet sites (accessed from an alternative site if necessary).</p>	SLT Line Manager for Exam Officer & Exam Officer

Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down)	When the exam room requires evacuation (eg due to fire/bomb threat) or the centre enters a lockdown procedure.	<p>Inform relevant awarding organisations as soon as it is possible and safe to do so and seek advice.</p> <p>Refer to emergency plans and/or health and safety policy/lockdown policy, where appropriate.</p> <p>Invigilators to follow the emergency evacuation/lockdown procedure for examinations in accordance with agreed protocols.</p>	Head of Centre & SLT Line Manager for Exam Officer
Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open	In the event that candidates are unable to attend examination centres to take examinations as normal eg sickness bug (including Covid19 (Coronavirus))	<p>Communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue and seek advice.</p> <p>Communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding any possible solutions/options to the issue.</p> <p>Liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with relevant awarding organisations.</p> <p>Offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series.</p> <p>Apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements.</p>	SLT Line Manager for Exam Officer & Exam Officer
Centre is unable to open as normal during the examination period	In the event that the centre is unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations, eg a fire at the centre forces it to close.	<p>Inform relevant awarding organisations as soon as possible and seek advice.</p> <p>Refer to emergency plans and/or health and safety policy, where appropriate.</p> <p>Open for the centre for examinations and examination candidates only, if possible.</p> <p>SLT to work with trust central team to source suitable exam venues (eg Brockington College) in agreement with relevant awarding organisations.</p> <p>Apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements.</p> <p>Offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available examinations series, if possible.</p>	Head of Centre & SLT Line Manager for Exam Officer

Disruption in the distribution of examination papers	In the event that there is disruption to the distribution of examination papers to centres in advance of examinations.	Communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery of papers. Arrange with awarding organisations for alternative means of receiving papers, eg electronically or alternative courier.	SLT Line Manager for Exam Officer & Exam Officer
Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts	In the event that there is a delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts.	Seek advice from awarding organisations and their normal collection agency regarding collection. Only make alternative arrangements after approval from awarding organisation and make sure papers are securely stored until collection.	SLT Line Manager for Exam Officer & Exam Officer
Assessment evidence is not available to be marked	In the event of large-scale damage to, or destruction of, completed examination scripts or assessment evidence before it can be marked, eg a fire at the centre destroys completed examination scripts.	Communicate this immediately to the relevant awarding organisation(s), candidates and their parents or carers. Seek advice from awarding organisations on their procedures for dealing with such issues. Where partial assessments can be recovered these will be made available where appropriate. Procedures to recover/re-complete work (eg IT data reconstruction for electronic work) will be employed where relevant. Mock paper marking and grading recorded on central school data system. Mock paper(s) to be retained by Head of Department until exam is complete and papers delivered to awarding organisation.	SLT Line Manager for Exam Officer & Exam Officer
Centre is unable to distribute results as normal	In the event that the centre is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates.	Contact awarding organisations about alternative options. Make arrangements to access results at an alternative site. Share facilities with other schools/colleges if possible.	SLT Line Manager for Exam Officer & Exam Officer

<p>Head of centre, or a member of the senior leadership team, with oversight of examination administration is absence (Escalation process)</p>	<p>In the event that the Head of centre, or a member of the senior leadership team, with oversight of examination administration is absence during the key points in the exam cycle.</p>	<p>Executive principal/senior leader from the trust alerted to staff absence and relief staff appointed and deployed from other sites as required. Support to be provided from the trust exams/data team as needed to ensure the examinations process continues seamlessly.</p>	<p>Other SLT member to contact the trust executive team.</p>
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Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning

JCQ guidance: [General Regulations - JCQ Joint Council for Qualifications](#)

Contingency planning

The qualifications 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.

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.

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.

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.

The awarding bodies will designate a “contingency day” for examinations, summer 2025. This is consistent with the qualification regulators’ document Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Ofqual guidance

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

Further guidance

JCQ Joint Contingency Plan [Gen regs approved centres 24-25 FINAL.pdf](#)

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

Guidance notes on alternative site arrangements www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms

Guidance notes for transferred candidates www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms

Instructions for Conducting Examinations 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

GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response: Exam disruption [What schools, colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted - GOV.UK](#)

Dispatch of exam scripts guide: Ensuring the service runs smoothly; Contingency planning

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service>

National Cyber Security Centre

The NCSC's free [Web Check](#) and [Mail Check](#) services can help protect schools from cyber-attacks. Two NCSC cyber security services, which are already helping thousands of organisations to protect their websites and email servers from cyber-attacks, are now available to **all UK schools**. Both tools are available free of charge, are quick to set up, and thereafter run automatically. More information is available from the [Check your cyber security - NCSC.GOV.UK](#).

The Department for Education has been asking centres to review **National Cyber Security Centre advice** following increasing number of cyber-attacks involving ransomware infections. The NCSC information supports centres in cyber security preparedness and mitigation work.

Ransomware attacks continue and the Department is reminding centres to review the NCSC advice and to take precautions. This includes ensuring that you have backups in place for your key services and data.

For ease of reference, the Department has highlighted key links relating to the NCSC cyber security guidance below:

1. More ransomware attacks on UK education - [National Cyber Security Centre - NCSC.GOV.UK](https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/national-cyber-security-centre-ncsc-uk-education)
2. Ransomware advice and guidance for your IT teams to implement
3. Offline backups in an online world
4. Backing up your data
5. Practical resources to help improve your cyber security
6. Building Resilience: Ransomware and the risks to schools and ways to prevent it
7. School staff offered training to help shore up cyber defences - NCSC.GOV.UK