



Bluecoat Beechdale
Academy

—
Believe, Belong, Achieve

BLUECOAT BEECHDALE ACADEMY EXAMS CONTINGENCY PLAN 2022/23

Key staff involved in contingency planning

Role	Name(s)
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Contents

Key staff involved in contingency planning.....	2
Purpose of the plan	4
Possible causes of disruption to the exam process.....	4
1. Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle).....	4
2. ALS Lead/SENCo extended absence at key points in the exam cycle.....	5
3. Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle	5
4. Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence.....	6
5. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice	6
6. Cyber Attacks	6
7. Failure of IT systems	7
8. Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down).....	7
9. Disruption of teaching time in the weeks before an exam– centre closed for an extended period	7
10. Candidates at risk of being unable to take examinations – centre remains open.....	7
11. Centre at risk of being unable to open as normal during the examination period.....	8
12. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers	8
13. Disruption to transporting completed examination scripts.....	8
14. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked	8
15. Centre unable to distribute results as normal or facilitate post results services	9
Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning	10
Ofqual	10
JCQ	12
GOV.UK	13
Wales	13
Northern Ireland	13
National Cyber Security Centre	Error! Bookmark not defined.

Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at the Bluecoat Beechdale 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 (and Northern Ireland Council of the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment) **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 Bluecoat Beechdale Academy is compliant with the JCQ regulation (section 5.3, *General Regulations for Approved Centre’s 2021-2022*) and 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 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*
- *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*
- *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

- *Affected cycles will be overseen by the Exams & Data 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

- *Senior TA/SEN Administrator to liaise with EO to ensure key tasks are met*

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

- The Director of Learning or Assistant DoL for each subject is responsible for ensuring all information is collated and given to EO before deadlines. EO also to ensure deadlines are met

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

- Access pool of invigilators from across Archway Learning Trust
- Supply invigilators will be booked to ensure exams are covered
- School support staff could be used to cover any shortfall or absence of 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

- Priority to be given to exams and classes moved to make suitable rooms available
- Alternative venue at our Trust sites at Aspley or Wollaton in agreement with relevant AO's

6. 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

- Security settings limiting access for standard users on machines
- Multiple levels of internet / e-mail filtering protecting against inbound viruses / attacks
- Layered backups allowing restoration of services with copies kept offline that cannot be targeted

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Exams officer unable to access downloadable exam paper on exam day

Output of network

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Paper based exams
- Ensure attendance registers and seating plans are pre-printed
- Manual seating plan and registers

- Trust IT services arrangements in place to ensure security against cyber attack

7. 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

- On site IT systems help desk available to help rectify any problems/communications with AO's to make alternative arrangements. e.g emailing information

8. 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 apply to AO's for special consideration if candidates have been fully prepared and have covered whole course, but are affected by adverse conditions beyond their control

9. Disruption of teaching time in the weeks before an exam– centre closed for an extended period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Centre closed or candidates are unable to attend for an extended period during normal teaching or study supported time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Arrangements for students to be taught at out Trust sites at Aspley and Wollaton or online learning
- Provide additional teaching time to cover lost time

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Communicate with candidates to identify if exam can be taken at alternative venue in agreement with AO's

- Centre to use alternative venue in agreement with relevant AO

11. Centre at risk of being unable to open as normal during the examination period

(Including the event of the centre being unavailable for examination 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 open for exam candidates only
- Centre to use alternative venue in agreement with relevant AO's
- Centre to apply to AO's for special consideration if candidates have been fully prepared and have covered whole course, but are affected by adverse conditions beyond their control

Alternative venue details:

Bluecoat Primary School and or other local Trust sites

12. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Disruption to the distribution of examination papers to the centre in advance of examinations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- AO's to provide centres with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network. Centres would need to ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions and should have plans in place to facilitate such an action.
- AO's 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 of the examination on an alternative date

13. Disruption to transporting 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 first instance seek advice from AO's and "yellow label" collecting agency regarding collection
- Centre to ensure secure storage of exam papers until collected
- Take packages to an Express Post Office that accepts Parcelforce Worldwide packages
- Take packages to nearest Parcelforce Worldwide depot

14. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Large scale damage to or destruction of completed examination scripts/assessment evidence before it can be marked
Completed examination scripts/assessment evidence does not reach awarding organisations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Head of Centre to communicate with relevant AO's/students/parents
- AO's to generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on the appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by AO
- Where marks cannot be generated by awarding organisations, candidates may need to retake affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series

15. 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

Distribution of results:

- centre to make arrangements to access its results at an alternative site, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation
- centre to make arrangements to coordinate access to post results services from an alternative site centre to share facilities with other centre if this is possible, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation.)

Facilitation of post results services:

- centre to make arrangements to make post results requests at an alternative location
- centres to contact the relevant awarding organisation if electronic post results requests are not possible)

Alternative venue details:

Bluecoat Primary School and or other local Trust sites

Further guidance to inform 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.

General contingency guidance

- [emergency planning and response](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [school organisation: local-authority-maintained schools](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [exceptional closure days](#) 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 in extremely bad weather](#) - guidance for schools from the Welsh Government
- [bomb threats](#) procedures for handling bomb threats from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office

Disruption to assessments or exams

In the absence of any instruction from the relevant awarding organisation, the school or college should assume that any exam or timetabled assessment should take place if it is possible for it to do so. This may mean having to locate alternative premises. You should discuss alternative arrangements with your awarding organisation if:

- the exam or assessment cannot take place
 - a student misses an exam or loses their assessment due to an emergency, or other event, outside of the student's control
- See also the [JCQ Joint Contingency Plan for the Examination System](#) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

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 AO and follow its instructions.
2. Take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether the school or college is able to open.
3. Identify whether the exam can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation.
4. Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exams 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 regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable.
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 students may be eligible 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 bodies should take

4.1 Exam planning

Establish and maintain 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 student misses an exam or are disadvantaged by the disruption

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

Decisions about what special consideration, when it is, or is not appropriate, is for awarding organisations 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 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 relevant professional bodies or employer groups if the impact of disruption particular affects them.

7. Widespread national disruption to 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

Contingency planning

15.1 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.

Further information may be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

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

15.3 Centres should prepare plans for any disruption to examinations as part of their general emergency planning. It is important to ensure that relevant centre staff are familiar with the plan. Consideration should be given as to how these arrangements will be communicated to candidates, parents and staff should disruption to examinations occur.

15.4 In the event that the head of centre decides the centre cannot be opened for scheduled examinations, the relevant awarding body must be informed as soon as possible. Awarding bodies will be able to offer advice regarding the alternative arrangements for conducting examinations that may be available and the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations.

15.5 The awarding bodies will designate a "contingency days" for examinations, summer 2023. 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-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 2023, the awarding bodies will liaise with the qualification regulators and government departments to agree the most appropriate option for managing the impact. As a last resort the affected examinations will be rescheduled. Although every effort would be taken to keep the impact to a minimum, it is possible that there could be more than one timetable date affected following the disruption, up to and including the last contingency day. Centres will be alerted if it 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 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.

[JCQ guidance above taken directly from JCQ *Instructions for conducting examinations 2022-23*
<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

JCQ notice - Preparing for disruption to examinations (effective from 11 October 2021) www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents

JCQ Notice to Centres - Examination contingency plan/examinations policy www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/notice-to-centres--exam-contingency-plan/

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;

www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings

Dispatch of exam scripts guide: Ensuring the service runs smoothly; Contingency planning
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service>

Wales

School closures: examinations gov.wales/school-closures-examinations

Opening schools in extremely bad weather: guidance for schools gov.wales/opening-schools-extremely-bad-weather-guidance-schools

Northern Ireland

Exceptional closure days 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

www.protectuk.police.uk

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 NCSC website.

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

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

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

1. More ransomware attacks on UK education - [NCSC.GOV.UK](https://www.ncsc.gov.uk)
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](https://www.ncsc.gov.uk)