

Exam Contingency Plan

2021/2022

Amended: October 2021

Approved by Trustees: December 2021

Review date: October 2022

Reviewing Panel: Standards, Staffing and Curriculum (SSC)

Key staff involved in contingency planning

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	David Wright
Exams officer line manager (Senior leader)	Ethan Roberts, Emma Jordan
Exams officer	Honor Dignan-Roth
ALS lead/SENCo	Hannah Tuna
Senior leader(s)	Ethan Roberts, Seddeer Amran, Emma Jordan, Hannath Tuna, Nicola White, Dominic Riste, Katie Heseltine

Contents

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

Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at Woodlands 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** for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

This plan also confirms Woodlands School's compliance with JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres** (section 5.3) 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

Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

1. Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the exam cycle not undertaken including:

Planning

- *annual data collection exercise not undertaken to collate information on qualifications and awarding body specifications being delivered*
- *annual exams plan not produced identifying essential key tasks, key dates and deadlines*
- *sufficient invigilators not recruited*

Entries

- *awarding bodies not being informed of early/estimated entries which prompts release of early information required by teaching staff*
- *candidates not being entered with awarding bodies for external exams/assessment*
- *awarding body entry deadlines missed or late or other penalty fees being incurred*

Pre-exams

- *invigilators not trained or updated on changes to instructions for conducting exams*
- *exam timetabling, rooming allocation; and invigilation schedules not prepared*
- *candidates not briefed on exam timetables and awarding body information for candidates*
- *confidential exam/assessment materials and candidates' work not stored under required secure conditions*
- *internal assessment marks and samples of candidates' work not submitted to awarding bodies/external moderators*

Exam time

- *exams/assessments not taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding bodies*
- *required reports/requests not submitted to awarding bodies during exam/assessment periods, for example very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration*
- *candidates' scripts not dispatched as required for marking to awarding bodies*

Results and post-results

- *access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates*
- *the facilitation of the post-results services*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The Exam Officer and SLT Manager work shadow so that both are able to fulfil the above tasks in the absence of the other.
- The Exam Officer provides full transcript of responsibilities and actions taken to prepare for and delivering a full exam season
- SLT Exams Line Manager to complete the SLT Exams Training via TEO
- Weekly line management meeting to discuss and keep updated on exams progress and upcoming plans
- SLT to nominate someone to cover role/tasks where needed from the Exams Team
- Network with staff from a local centre if further advice/support is needed
- To ensure the Exams Officer attends CPD opportunities and is able to network with exams officers and awarding bodies
- Review contingency plans in advance of exam series

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

- SENCo has timetable of key dates in place that are adhered to and shared with the department
- Files and documents are made available to the Exams Officer, SENCo assistant and SENCo admin assistant
- The school sources an alternative specialist teacher from its federation of schools who undertakes assessments
- SENCo keeps progress mentors up to date with exams training – covering access arrangements, collection of evidence and storing evidence of need
- Staffing shared at SLT; SLT would cover staffing responsibilities with the Exams Officer in the event of an absent SENCo. Senior Progress Mentors and SENCo Admin staff would also support SLT with accessing pupil access arrangement information.

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

- Exams Officer to liaise with Head of Faculty and subject teachers to ensure all necessary awarding body deadlines are adhered to and centre assessed marks are submitted to boards
- Exams Officer to liaise with head of faculty to discuss process enabling students to access centre assessed marks prior to any marks being submitted online
- Exams Officer to work with SLT line manager to ensure all deadlines have been covered and ensure all information has been shared with pupils with regards to NEA and centre assessed marks
- Timetable with entry information given to pupils and also sent home to parents for additional checking

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

- As well as externally recruited invigilators, internal support staff are trained as invigilators and used if needed
- Increased recruitment of invigilators; allowing for absence and rooming manoeuvre
- Invigilators are roomed at a slightly lower ratio than 1:30 to allow for any changes in invigilation numbers

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

- Exams Officer to liaise with Cover Supervisor to ensure rooming requests are completed before Easter break
- In the event of the main exam venue being unavailable at short notice, the Exams Officer and Head of Centre will liaise with centre staff to move the exam to the performance hall, construction room, activity studio, opportunities hub and the atrium/gallery of excellence (larger spaces in the school) if required in the event of an emergency. Exams Team to re-room lessons as appropriate; all ensuring the exam is not compromised during this time
- If required, in the event of an emergency, the Head of Centre will liaise with the Executive Head to locate other venue opportunities

6. Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

MIS system failure at final entry deadline

MIS system failure during exams preparation

MIS system failure at results release time

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue and seek advice
- Exams Officer and IT Manager to liaise and identify feasible options given by awarding bodies
- Exams Officer and IT Manager to work with MIS operator to fix the issue

7. Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Whole centre evacuation (or lock down) during exam time due to serious incident resulting in exam candidates being unable to start, proceed with or complete their exams

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Refer to critical Incident Policy
- Refer to Emergency Evacuation Policy

8. 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 centre will communicate with parents, carers and pupils regarding the potential for disruption to teaching time and the action plan to address this
- Catchup sessions and programmes will be put into place for identified pupils if time permits

- Facilitate alternative methods of learning – including the use of virtual video lessons to aid pupils learning effectively
- Deliver lessons via online platforms like Microsoft Teams. Laptops have been given out to those in need of laptops at the beginning of this academic year 2021-2022.
- Find an alternative venue in one of the other Federation centres
- Prioritise candidates who will be facing examination shortly
- Advise candidates, where appropriate, to sit examinations in the next available series

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

- The centre will communicate with parents, carers and pupils regarding the potential for disruption to teaching time and the plans to address this
- Liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative Federation venue in agreement with the relevant awarding organisations
- Offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series
- Apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements

9. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open

10. Centre unable to open as normal during the examination period

(Including in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Centre unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Open for examinations and examination candidates only, if possible
- Use an alternative Federation venue in agreement with relevant awarding organisations
- Apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates for any disruptions and if unable to sit where they have met the minimum requirements
- Offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series, if possible
- Inform each awarding organisation with which examinations are due to be taken as soon as it is possible

emergency)

11. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Awarding organisations to provide centres with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network. Centres will need to ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions and

should have plans in place to facilitate such an action. Awarding organisations will 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

12. 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

- Seek advice from awarding organisations and their normal collection agency regarding collection
- Where examinations are part of the national 'Yellow Label' service or where awarding organisations arrange collections, centres should seek advice from awarding organisations and should not make their own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding organisation
- For any examinations where centres make their own arrangements for transportation, centres should investigate alternative dispatch options that comply with the requirements details in the JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations
- Ensure secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection

13. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Large scale damage to or destruction of completed examination scripts/assessment evidence before it can be marked

Completed examination scripts/assessment evidence does not reach awarding organisations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Contact awarding organisations immediately for guidance
- Awarding organisations generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement, as defined by the awarding organisations in consultation with the regulators
- Candidates retake the assessment that has been affected at a subsequent assessment window, if possible

14. 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

- Contact awarding organisations about alternative options
- Make arrangements to access results at an alternative Federation site
- Contact pupils and parents and post information on school website
- 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

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:

1.1 Covid specific guidance:

- Guidance for schools Covid-19 from the Department for Education in England (subject to frequent updates as the situation changes)
- Responsibility for autumn GCSE, AS and A level exam series from the Department for Education in England
- Action for FE Colleges from the Department for Education in England
- Public health guidance to support autumn exams from the Department for Education
- Education and childcare: coronavirus from Welsh Government
- Covid-19 - guidance for school and educational settings from Department of Education in Northern Ireland

1.2 General contingency guidance

- Emergency planning and response from the Department for Education in England
- Opening and closing 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 closures from NI Direct
- Opening schools in extremely bad weather - guidance for schools from the Welsh Government
- Procedures for handling bomb threats from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office.

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

See also:

- JCQ Joint Contingency Plan for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

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 organisations in line with their instructions. Never make alternative arrangements for the transportation of completed exam scripts, unless told to do so by the awarding organisation.

4. Steps the awarding organisation should take

4.1 Exam planning

1. Establish and maintain, and at all times comply with, an up-to-date, written contingency plan.
2. 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

- Take all reasonable steps to mitigate any adverse effect, in relation to their qualifications, arising from any disruption.
- Provide effective guidance to any of their centres delivering qualifications.
- 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).
- Promptly notify the relevant regulators about any event which could have an adverse effect on students, standards or public confidence.
- 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.

7. Widespread national disruption to the taking of examinations / assessments

The governments' view across England, Wales and Northern Ireland is education should continue in 2020/21 with schools remaining open and that examinations and assessments will go ahead in both autumn 2020 and summer 2021.

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 should national disruption occur with any further relevant links.

(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 01 October 2020)

<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

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: Severe weather; Exam disruption; Coronavirus (COVID-19) www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings

Opening and closing maintained schools 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](https://www.gov.wales/school-closures-examinations)

Opening schools in extremely bad weather: guidance for schools [gov.wales/opening-schools-extremely-bad-weather-guidance-schools](https://www.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 www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools

National Counter Terrorism Security Office

Checklist for managing bomb threats www.gov.uk/government/publications/bomb-threats-guidance/procedures-for-handling-bomb-threats

Signed: _____


Head Teacher

Dated: 6th December 2021

Signed: _____


Chair of Trustees

Dated: 6th December 2021

