



*Finding Pathways to Learning & Living*

# **Exam contingency plan**

## **2023/24**

This plan is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Date of next review	January 2024

## Key staff involved in contingency planning

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name(s)</b>
Head of centre	Cathy Clay
Exams officer line manager (Senior Leader)	Shirley Burman
Exams officer	Lesley Turner
SENCo	Cathy Clay

## 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. 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. Failure of IT systems.....	6
7. Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down) .....	7
8. Disruption of teaching time – centre closed for an extended period .....	7
9. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open .....	7
10. Centre unable to open as normal during the exams period (including in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency) .....	8
11. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers.....	8
12. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts .....	8
13. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked .....	9
14. Centre unable to distribute results as normal (including in the event of the centre being unavailable on results day owing to an unforeseen emergency) .....	9
Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning .....	10
Ofqual.....	10
JCQ .....	11
GOV.UK.....	12

## Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at Derrymount 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 *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*.

This plan also confirms Derrymount School is compliant with the JCQ regulation (section 5.3, *General Regulations for Approved Centres 2018-2019*) 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.*

## 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

Where absence interferes with any of these key processes:

- ▶ *Initially, several members of staff will be trained on some aspects of the job.*
- ▶ *If absence is prolonged, consideration to be given to employing a suitably qualified replacement on a supply, temporary or fixed term basis.*

### **2. 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

- ▶ *Where absence prevents completion of the assessment and approval of candidates, the Headteacher will appoint a suitably qualified assessor and formally confirm their competency.*
- ▶ *Where absence interferes with making and checking access arrangements, the designated HLTA will carry out this task.*

### **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

- ▶ In the event of absence, the Departmental Line Manager will identify a suitable deputy (normally second in department where present).
- ▶ In the absence of a teacher, the line manager can submit the necessary data.
- ▶ In the event of long term absence a supply teacher would be given the duties.

**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

- ▶ In the event of a shortage of available staff, the Exams Officer will seek to cover using: invigilators employed by other centres; agency staff; support staff available within Derrymount.

**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

- ▶ If the Main Hall and/or Gymnasium are unavailable for examinations, or all candidates cannot be accommodated, other rooms in the school will be used, e.g. Sports Hall and Drama Studio

**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

- ▶ In the event of MIS or other system failure, Exams Officer will liaise with ICT Technician, Business Manager and IT support provider to determine appropriate action.
- ▶ Exam officer to liaise with Awarding bodies to determine another way of making entries.
- ▶ Possibility of using a consortium school to help with making the entries if we know the deadline will not otherwise be met.

## 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

- ▶ The responsibility for deciding whether it is safe for the school to open lies with the Headteacher (Head of centre).
- ▶ The Headteacher is responsible for taking advice, or following instructions from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether they are able to open.
- ▶ The school will open for examinations and examination candidates only if it possible to conduct examinations safely and in accordance with relevant guidance from awarding bodies.
- ▶ The school will consider the use of alternative venues in agreement with relevant awarding organisations (e.g. share facilities with other centres or use other public building, if possible)

## 8. Disruption of teaching time – 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 Derrymount School is 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, it is the responsibility of the School to prepare students, as usual, for examinations.
- ▶ The school should plan to facilitate teaching and learning by an alternative method or at an alternative location.
- ▶ Guidance on emergency planning, with advice on severe weather, is available on the Department for Education website: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings>

## 9. 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

- ▶ The school can liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with the relevant awarding organisations. JCQ guidance on alternative site arrangements can be accessed through the JCQ website (see *Useful Links* below)
- ▶ The school can offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series
- ▶ The school can apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements. 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. JCQ guidance on special consideration can be accessed through the JCQ website (see *Useful Links* below)

**10. Centre unable to open as normal during the exams period (including in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an 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

- ▶ If Derrymount School is unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations it will inform each awarding organisation with which examinations are due to be taken as soon as is possible.
- ▶ The responsibility for deciding whether it is safe for the school to open lies with the Headteacher (Head of centre).
- ▶ The Headteacher is responsible for taking advice, or following instructions from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether they are able to open.
- ▶ The school will open for examinations and examination candidates only if it possible to conduct examinations safely and in accordance with relevant guidance from awarding bodies.
- ▶ The school will consider the use of alternative venues in agreement with relevant awarding organisations (e.g. share facilities with other centres or use other public building, if possible)
- ▶ The school can apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements (see item 5.1 above).

**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

If the distribution of examination papers to centres in advance of Examinations is disrupted:

- ▶ The awarding organisations will source alternative couriers for delivery of hardcopies.
- ▶ The awarding organisations will provide the school with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network.
- ▶ The awarding organisations will fax examination papers to centres if electronic transfer is not possible.
- ▶ The Examinations Officer will ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions.

**12. Disruption to the transportation of 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

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

- ▶ The school will seek advice from awarding organisations and normal collection agency regarding collection. The school will not make arrangements for transportation without approval from awarding organisations.
- ▶ The school will 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*

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

If assessment evidence is not available to be marked, for example owing to large scale damage to or destruction of completed examination scripts/assessment evidence:

- ▶ The awarding organisations should 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.
- ▶ The candidates should retake affected assessment at the subsequent assessment window.

### 14. Centre unable to distribute results as normal (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

If the school is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates, or to facilitate post results services, the school will contact the awarding organisations about alternative options:

- ▶ The school will make arrangements to access its results at an alternative site.
- ▶ The school will make arrangements to coordinate access to post results services from an alternative site.
- ▶ The school will share facilities with other centres where 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 as part of your emergency planning and make sure your 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 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

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](#)
- [FAB'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

In the event of widespread sustained national disruption, the 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.

[Ofqual guidance extract 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 23 January 2018) <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, JCQ 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 have designated **Wednesday 28 June 2023** as a 'contingency day' for examinations. This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/examsystem-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 local disruption to examinations. It is part of the awarding bodies' standard contingency planning for examinations.

**Centres must therefore remind candidates that they must remain available until Wednesday 28 June 2023 should an awarding body need to invoke its contingency plan.**

[JCQ guidance 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**]

*General Regulations for Approved Centres* <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations>

*Guidance on Alternative Site arrangements and Transferred Candidate arrangements*

Accessed through secure login to the Centre Admin Portal (CAP) or through the JCQ training site

<http://jqc.training.jcq.org.uk/CAP/Home/Training>

*Instructions for Conducting Examinations* <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>

*A guide to the special consideration process* <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance>

## **GOV.UK**

*Emergency planning and response: Severe weather; Exam disruption*

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings>

*Teaching time lost due to severe weather conditions*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-time-lost-due-to-severe-weather-conditions>

*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>

*Statutory guidance on school closures* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools>

## **Wales**

*School closures – opening schools in extreme bad weather*

<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/schoolclosuresfaq/?lang=en>

## **Northern Ireland**

*Exceptional closure days* <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days>

*Checklist for Principals when considering Opening or Closure of School* <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools>

*School closures* <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/school-closures>

Awarding Bodies tel no:

WJEC	02920 265 000
AQA	0800 197 7162
OCR	01223 553 998
Pearson	08444 632 535
CIE	01223 553 554

