

# West Park

*'A caring school where we put pupils and their achievement first'*



## Examination Policy

## **Policy Statement**

The purpose of this examination policy is:

- To ensure the planning and management of examinations is conducted efficiently and in the best interest of candidates
- To ensure the operation of an efficient examination system with clear guidelines for all relevant staff

It is the responsibility of everyone involved in the Centre's examination processes to read, understand and implement this policy.

This examination policy will be reviewed annually.

This examination policy will be reviewed by the Head of Centre, Deputy Head with responsibility for examinations and the Examinations Officer.

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## 1. Examination roles and responsibilities overview

### Head of Centre

The head of centre is the individual who is accountable to the awarding bodies for ensuring that the centre is always compliant with the published JCQ regulations and awarding body requirements in order to ensure the security and integrity of the examinations/assessments.

Overall responsibility for the school as an examination centre:

- Understands the contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to annually updated JCQ publications including:
  - General Regulations for Approved Centres (GR)
  - Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE)
  - Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (AA)
  - Suspected Malpractice - Policies and Procedures (SM)
  - Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments (NEA) (and the instructions for conducting coursework)
  - A guide to the special consideration process (SC)
- Ensures the centre has appropriate accommodation to support the size of the cohorts being taught including appropriate accommodation for candidates requiring access arrangements for exams and assessments

### National Centre Number Register

- Takes responsibility for confirming, on an annual basis, that they are aware of and adhering to the latest version of the JCQ's regulations by responding to the head of centre's declaration which is managed as part of the National Centre Number Register (NCNR) annual update
- Understands that this responsibility cannot be delegated to a member of the senior leadership team or the examinations officer, and acknowledges that failure to respond to the NCNR annual update, and/or the head of centre's declaration, will result in:
  - the centre status being suspended
  - the centre not being able to submit examination entries
  - the centre not receiving or being able to access question papers

## Recruitment, selection and training of staff

- Retains a workforce of an appropriate size and competence, including sufficient managerial and other resource, to undertake the delivery of the qualification as required by an awarding body. This includes taking reasonable steps to ensure occupational competence where this is required for the assessment of specific qualifications
- Provides fully qualified teachers to mark non-examination assessments, and/or fully qualified assessors for the verification of centre-assessed components
- Enables the relevant senior leader(s), the examinations officer (EO) and SENCO to receive appropriate training and support in order to facilitate the effective delivery of examinations and assessments within the centre, and ensure compliance with the published JCQ regulations
- Appoints a SENCO who will determine appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties and disabilities

## Internal governance arrangements

- Has in place a written escalation process should the head of centre, or a member of the senior leadership team with oversight of examination administration, be absent. This procedure can be found in appendix 1 (Escalation Process)
- Has in place a member of the senior leadership team who will provide support and guidance to the examinations officer and ensure that the integrity and security of examinations and assessments is maintained throughout an examination series
- Ensures centre staff undertake key tasks within the exams process and meet internal deadlines set by the EO
- Makes sure that a teacher, a tutor or a senior member of centre staff who teaches the subject being examined, is not an invigilator during an examination

## Internal Appeals Procedures

- Ensures required internal appeals procedures are in place and drawn to the attention of candidates and (where relevant) their parents/carers
- Advises on appeals and re-marks

## Irregularities

- Ensures (as required by an awarding body) any cases of alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice or maladministration before, during or after examinations/assessments (by centre staff, candidates, invigilators) are

investigated and reported to the awarding body **immediately**, by completing the appropriate documentation

### Examinations Officer

Manages the administration of public and internal examinations:

- Advises the senior leadership team, subject and class tutors and other relevant support staff on annual examination timetables and application procedures as set by the various examination boards
- Oversees the production and distribution to staff, governors and candidates of an annual calendar for all examinations in which candidates will be involved and communicates regularly with staff concerning imminent deadlines and events
- Ensures that candidates and their parents are informed of, and understand, those aspects of the examination timetable that will affect them
- Informs teaching staff of non-examination assessment deadlines in accordance with JCQ guidelines
- Provides and confirms detailed data on estimated entries, if required by examination boards
- Receives, checks and stores securely all examination papers and completed scripts
- Makes applications for special consideration with reference to JCQ *'Guide to the Special Consideration Process'*.
- Identifies and manages examination timetable clashes
- Accounts for income and expenditures relating to all examination costs/charges
- Organises the recruitment, training and monitoring of a team of examinations invigilators responsible for the conduct of examinations
- Ensures candidates' non-examination assessment marks are submitted on schedule, tracks dispatch of sample work and forwards returned work to Heads of Subject for storage
- Arranges for dissemination of examination results and certificates to candidates and submits, in consultation with the Leadership Group, any appeals and review of marking requests
- Maintains systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their examinations

### Examinations Officer/Data Systems Manager

- Administers access arrangements to comply with JCQ *'Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments'* in absence of SENCO
- Prepares data for the Leadership Group showing results achieved in relation to expected grades and provides comparable data for previous years to enable future procedural improvements

- Prepares timetables for all internal examinations and seating plans where appropriate

### Heads of Department

- Guidance and pastoral oversight of candidates who are unsure about examination entries or amendments to entries
- Involvement in post-results procedures
- Accurate completion of non-examination assessment mark sheets and declaration sheets and online submission to examination boards
- Ensure candidates are aware of, and comply with, JCQ regulations on plagiarism
- Accurate completion of entry and all other mark sheets and adherence to deadlines as set by the Examinations Officer
- Storage of all candidates' work for the required period set by the examination boards after the publication of results

### Subject Teachers

- Ensure Heads of Department are provided with correct entry information for their candidates
- Accurately check provisional and final entries for their candidates
- Ensure candidates are aware of, and comply with, JCQ regulations on plagiarism
- Comply with all non-examination assessment guidelines
- Provide non-examination assessment marks to Head of Department when requested to meet deadlines set by the examination boards/Examinations Officer

### SENCO

- Advise Examinations Officer of all access arrangements required by candidates
- Identification and testing of candidates' requirements for access arrangements
- Provision of additional support — with spelling, reading, mathematics, dyslexia or essential skills, hearing impairment, English for speakers of other languages, IT equipment — to help candidates achieve to the best of their ability

### Lead invigilator

- To assist Examinations Officer to prepare all examination materials and rooms
- Collection of examination papers and other material from the examinations office before the start of the examination
- To advise and direct the lay invigilators during the examination

### Lead invigilator/invigilators

- Supervise entry of candidates into examination room and visually check for possession of unauthorised material
- Ensure regulations in JCQ 'Instructions for Conducting Examinations' are maintained throughout the examination
- Collection of all examination papers in the correct order at the end of the examination and their return to the examinations office

### Candidates

- Confirmation and signing of entries
- Understanding and applying non-examination assessment regulations, particularly those relating to plagiarism, and signing a declaration that authenticates the work as their own
- Understanding and applying all examination regulations for written papers/on-screen tests

### Administrative staff

- Supervise arrival of examination papers/material and collection of scripts by couriers (Parcelforce)
- Advise Heads of Subject of procedure for posting non-examination/controlled assessment and other examination documents

### Site Staff

- To set up all examination rooms as requested by the Examinations Officer

## **2. The statutory tests and qualifications offered**

The qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the senior leadership team.

The qualifications offered are GCSE and BTEC.

The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found on the school website. If there has been a change of syllabus from the previous year, the Head of Department/Subject must inform the examinations office by the first day of the new academic year in September.

Decisions on whether a candidate should not take an individual subject will be taken by the school.

### **3. Examination seasons and timetables**

#### 3.1 Examination seasons

Internal examinations are scheduled in December, April, May and June.

External examinations are scheduled in January, May and June, with on-demand external assessments at the request of the Head of Subject.

Internal examinations will follow conditions as close as possible to external examination regulations, particularly for Year 10/11 Mock GCSE examinations.

#### 3.2 Timetables

Once confirmed, the Examinations Officer will circulate the examination timetables for internal and external examinations.

### **4. Entries, entry details and late entries**

#### 4.1 Entries

Candidates are selected for their examination entries by the Heads of Subject, Heads of Department, subject teachers, and the Senior Leadership Team.

The Centre does not accept entries from external/private candidates.

#### 4.2 Late entries

Entry deadlines are circulated to Heads of Department via email.

Late entries must be authorised by the Heads of Department in consultation with the Examinations Officer.

### **5. Examination fees**

The Centre will pay all normal examination fees on behalf of candidates. Candidates may be asked to pay re-sit fees and review of marking fees.



Late entry or amendment fees are paid by the department that requests them.

Departments will not be charged for changes of tier, withdrawals made by the proper procedures or alterations arising from administrative processes **provided these are made within the time allowed by the awarding bodies.**

## **6. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), special needs and access arrangements**

### 6.1 DDA

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 extends the application of the DDA to general qualifications. All examination centre staff must ensure that the access arrangements and special consideration regulations and guidance are consistent with the law.

### 6.2 Special needs

A candidate's special needs requirements are determined by the SENCO and educational psychologist /specialist teacher.

The SENCO will inform subject teachers of candidates with special educational needs who are embarking on a course leading to an examination. The SENCO can then inform individual staff of any special arrangements that individual candidates can be granted during the course and in the examination.

### 6.3 Access arrangements

Making special arrangements for candidates to take examinations is the responsibility of the SENCO and the Examinations Officer.

Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the SENCO after consultation with the Specialist Teacher responsible for testing.

Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by SENCO/Examinations Officer.

Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates will be organised by the Examinations Officer/SENCO.

## **7. Managing invigilators and examination days**

### 7.1 Managing invigilators

External invigilators or cover supervisors will be used for most internal and external examinations.

The recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the Examinations Officer.

Securing the necessary DBS check for new invigilators is the responsibility of the centre administration. Fees for securing such clearance are paid by the centre.

Invigilators are timetabled and briefed by the Examinations Officer.

Invigilators' rates of pay are set by the centre administration.

## 7.2 Examination days

The Examinations Officer will book all examination rooms after liaison with other users and make the question papers, other examination stationery and materials available for the invigilator. Candidates are responsible for providing the correct equipment.

Site management is responsible for setting up the allocated rooms.

The Head/Deputy Head/Examinations Officer/lead invigilator will start all examinations in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

In practical examinations subject teachers may be on hand in case of any technical difficulties.

Subject staff should not be present during any part of an external examination in their subject unless specifically requested to be there by the Examinations Officer for administrative purposes.

Examination papers must not be read by subject teachers or removed from the examination room before the end of a session. Papers will be distributed to Heads of Department when all examination scripts have been collected and checked for despatch to the Examination Boards.

## **8. Candidates, clash candidates and special consideration**

### 8.1 Candidates

The Centre's published rules on acceptable dress, behaviour and candidates' use of mobile phones and all electronic devices apply at all times.

Candidates' personal belongings remain their own responsibility and the Centre accepts no liability for their loss or damage.

Disruptive candidates are dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

Candidates may leave the examination room for a genuine purpose requiring an immediate return to the examination room, in which case a member of staff must accompany them.

The Examinations Officer and Administrative staff will attempt to contact any candidate who is not present at the start of an examination and deal with them in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

### 8.2 Clash candidates

The Examinations Officer will be responsible, as necessary, for arranging supervision of clash candidates and rescheduling their timetable to comply with JCQ regulations.

### 8.3 Special consideration

Should a candidate be ill before an examination, suffer bereavement or other trauma, be taken ill during the examination itself or otherwise disadvantaged or disturbed during an examination, then it is the candidate's responsibility to alert the Centre, the Examinations Officer, or the examination invigilator, to that effect.

The candidate must support any special consideration claim with appropriate evidence within three days of the examination, for example a letter from the candidate's doctor.

The Examinations Officer will then submit an application for special consideration to the relevant awarding body within seven days of the end of the examination series.

### 8.4 Verify identity of candidates

A senior member of staff and lead invigilator, who are familiar with the pupils will be present for the start of all exams. Photographs for all external examination pupils are available to the lead invigilator to check the identity of any pupil they do not recognise.

Candidates are registered in the sports hall, T6 and other appropriate exam rooms and seating plans are used to identify any absent pupils.

### 8.5 Issues with candidate identification

If it is not possible to identify a candidate due to religious clothing, such a veil, the candidate should be approached by a member of staff of the same gender and taken to

a private room where they will be politely asked to remove the religious clothing for identification purposes. Once identification has been established, the candidate should replace, for example, their veil and proceed as normal to sit the examination.

### 8.6 Recognition of prior learning

For any candidate joining the centre after the start point of any key stage 4 course any appropriate prior learning will be recognised by the centre with details being confirmed by the candidate's previous centre.

## **9. Non-examination Assessment and appeals against internal assessment decisions**

### 9.1 Non-examination Assessment

Candidates must complete all non-examination assessments by the deadline set by the examination board/Examinations Officer.

Heads of Department will ensure all work is ready for dispatch at the correct time and will keep a record of what has been sent when and to whom.

Marks for all internally assessed work are submitted to the examinations boards by the Heads of Subject and Heads of Department by the deadline set by the examination boards.

### 9.2 Appeals against internal assessment decisions

The Centre is obliged to publish a separate procedure on this subject, which is available from the examinations office.

The main points are:

- appeals will only be entertained if they apply to the process leading to an assessment. There is no appeal against the mark or grade awarded
- candidates may appeal if they feel their non-examination assessment has been assessed unfairly, inconsistently or not in accordance with the specification for the qualification
- appeals should be made in writing, by the first week in April, to the Examinations Officer who will decide whether the process used conformed to the necessary requirements
- the Head of Centre's findings will be notified in writing, copied to the Examinations Officer and recorded for awarding body inspection.

## 10. Results, enquiries about results (EARs) and access to scripts (ATS)

### 10.1 Results

Candidates will receive individual results slips on results days either in person at the Centre, by a person authorised in writing by the candidate or by post to their home addresses (candidates to provide stamp).

Arrangements for the school to be open on results days will be made by the Examinations Officer.

In the event of the school being unavailable for results day then results will be sent to the candidate's school email address. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that they have access to their login details.

### 10.2 EARs

EARs may be requested by centre staff or candidates if there are reasonable grounds for believing there has been an error in marking. All EAR requests must be authorised by the candidate.

If a result is queried, the Examinations Officer, teaching staff and Head of Centre will investigate the feasibility of asking for a review of marking at the centre's expense. If the centre does not agree to pay, then all costs incurred are to be paid by the candidate. Payment of fees must be made before the EAR request is submitted to the awarding body.

When the Centre does not uphold an EAR, a candidate may apply to have an enquiry carried out. If a candidate requires this against the advice of subject staff, they will be charged.

### 10.3 ATS

Centre staff may request scripts for investigation or for teaching purposes. For the latter, the consent of candidates must be obtained.

GCSE review of marking requests cannot be applied for once an original script has been returned.

(See also section 5: Examination fees)

## 11. Certificates

Certificates are collected and signed for.

Certificates may be collected on behalf of a candidate by a third party, provided they have written authorisation from the candidate and proof of I.D.

The Centre retains certificates for six years.

## 12. Examination Contingency Plan (Administration)

In the event of the extended absence of the Examinations Officer, the examination administration will be covered, as detailed in the Examinations Contingency Plan (appendix 1), with the Deputy Head having overall responsibility for the completion of tasks.

Scott McGregor

Leonie Shepherd

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**Head of Centre**

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**Examinations Officer**

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**Date 15/10/2021**

The policy is next due for review October 2022

## **Examinations Contingency Plan**

### **Absence of Examinations Officer**

In the prolonged absence of the Examinations Officer, at key points in the examination process, the examination administration will be covered as follows, with the Deputy Head with oversight of Examinations having overall responsibility for the completion of tasks. The Deputy Head will be assisted by the Examinations Assistant.

### **Examination Timetables/Key dates**

Internal examination timetables to be arranged by Deputy Head, in discussion with Heads of Subject, produced and distributed to staff, parents and pupils by Heads of Year and Data Manager.

Key dates/External examination timetables, available on examination board websites, to be distributed by Data Manager.

### **External examination entries**

Estimated entries, external examination and assessment entries, as requested by Heads of Subject, to be processed by Data Manager.

### **Pre-examination planning**

**Invigilation** – Associate Staff Manager/Bursar/Personnel to be responsible for appointment of sufficient invigilators/cover supervisors. Lead invigilator to train new staff.

**Invigilation rota** – person responsible for cover together with Examinations Assistant.

**Seating plans** – to be prepared and distributed by Data Manager.

**Access arrangements** – SENCO to process Access Arrangement requests, room allocation, TAs and invigilation of access arrangement pupils.

**Receipt/checking and storage of examination scripts** – Examinations Assistant, Finance Officer are secure storage key holders.

### **IT Requirements**

Basedata, EDI, downloads etc., and computers for examination use – IT support staff.

### **Setting up of examination rooms**

Site team and Lead Invigilator, with advice from SENCO and Deputy Associate Head to comply with all JCQ regulations.

### **Day to day running of examinations**

Examinations Assistant/Cover Supervisors with assistance from invigilation team, together with Deputy Head, to comply with all JCQ regulations.

### **Emergency evacuation of examination room**

Member of Senior Leadership Team to supervise evacuation procedure.

### **Checking and despatch of scripts**

Lead Invigilator/Cover supervisor.

### **Results**

Preparation of results for results day and distribution to pupils – examinations assistant and Data Manager.

### **Post results services**

**Enquiries about results/Appeals** – Data Manager as requested by Deputy Head and Heads of Subject.

### **Preparation and collection of examination certificates**

Examinations Assistant and admin staff under guidance of Associate Staff Manager.



### **Escalation Process**

If the event of the Head of Centre, or a member of the senior leadership team with oversight of examination administration be absent then the overall responsibility would be designated to the second Deputy Head with the examination administration being delivered by the Examinations Officer.

The next escalation process for if the second Deputy head is absent, the overall responsibility would be designated to the Assistant Heads with the examination administration being delivered by the Examinations Officer.

### **SENCO extended absence at key points in the exam cycle**

In the absence of the SENCO the role will be covered by the Deputy SENCO.

### **Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle**

The Curriculum Leader and/or SLT will liaise with Heads of Departments to ensure all necessary deadlines are adhered to and appropriate cover is arranged for the absent teacher. In the absence of Heads of Department, the Second in Department will fulfil the role. If further action is required the Examinations Officer will liaise with the relevant Awarding Body and act upon advice received.

### **Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence**

Examinations Officer will review invigilation staffing for each external exam cycle and ensure sufficient staff and training is completed.

Designated non-teaching staff, cover supervisors and TA's receive annual invigilation training and can be used to cover invigilation absence.

### **Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice**

Examinations Officer will organise rooming for examinations in advance of the exam season starting allowing sufficient time to identify appropriate rooms and plan accordingly. Priority will be given to accommodate external examinations.

In the event of a room not being available at very short notice, sufficient staff will be made available to ensure the security of the examination is not compromised whilst alternative rooming is sourced. The Examinations Officer will contact the relevant Awarding Body if alternative venue is required and complete alternative site form.

### **Failure of IT systems**

If MIS failure at final entry deadline, the centre must immediately liaise with Awarding body with which examination entries are with and seek guidance as to how an alternative entry can be made. The centre will endeavour to make entries before the Awarding Bodies final submission deadline.

If MIS failure at results stage, the centre will consider alternative sites to access information. Awarding Bodies will be contacted if alternative arrangements are required. Candidates will be made aware of delay to release of results and how results will be distributed.

### **Emergency evacuation of the exam room**

Centre to refer to Emergency Evacuation policy

### **Disruption of teaching time – centre closed for an extended period**

Head of centre and SLT to consider alternative venue if possible. If alternate venue is not possible, work will be provided via the online offering.

Candidates will be set work on Firefly and communications will be made through school email. For candidates who do not have access to electronic resources, a laptop will be provided where possible or printed versions will be posted.

### **Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open**

Individual candidate absence will be given consideration and the Examinations Officer may apply for special consideration where the correct criteria's have been met.

For a national/local crisis where all candidates are unable to attend, the relevant awarding bodies will be contacted for further guidance. The examinations Officer will liaise with SLT to take appropriate action.

### **Centre unable to open as normal during the examination period (full and partial closure)**

#### **Full Closure**

If the centre is unable to accommodate external examinations, alternative accommodation will be sourced where possible at neighbouring schools, church hall, village hall etc. The Examinations Officer will contact the relevant Awarding Bodies to discuss alternative arrangements and liaise with the SLT to take appropriate action.

### **Partial Closure**

In the event of the main school being closed but the scheduled examinations still being able to take place, the main examinations Hall (Sports Hall) will be used. If required the gate at the Woodlands carpark can be used for the examinations entrance and exit.

### **Disruption in the distribution of examination papers**

The Examinations officer will check a week before the scheduled exam to make sure papers have arrived and the correct amount of papers have been sent. If they have not the Examinations officer to contact exam boards to gain access to electronic examination papers. Reprographics to print emergency exam papers (supervised by exams officer or exams assistant). Examinations Officer will ensure exam papers are kept under secure conditions throughout the printing process.

### **Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts**

In the first instance, exam papers will be stored overnight in the centre's secure facility until the next Parcelforce collection. If Parcelforce collection is not possible, the exams officer and/or assistant will take exam scripts to the local Post Office to be collected by Parcelforce. Examinations officer will communicate with the relevant awarding bodies to inform them of any delay and seek further advice.

### **Assessment evidence is not available to be marked**

The Examinations Officer will contact the Awarding Body to notify them of any such incidents and act upon advice given.

### **Centre unable to distribute results as normal or facilitate post results services**

In the event of the school being unavailable for results day, an agreement is in place with Springfield Primary School that results day can be held on their site. Pupils would be notified via text message and signs on the school gates. Alternative to this, results will be emailed to candidate's school email address.

Examinations Officer will arrange alternate site to access results and make post result requests. Examinations Officer will contact Awarding Bodies if electronic post results are not possible and act upon advice given.

## [Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning](#)

### Contingency planning

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

#### **Covid specific guidance:**

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

- **actions for schools during the coronavirus outbreak** from the Department for Education in England ([www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak))
- **responsibility for exams** from the Department for Education in England ([www.gov.uk/government/publications/responsibility-for-autumn-gcse-as-and-a-level-exam-series](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/responsibility-for-autumn-gcse-as-and-a-level-exam-series))
- **vocational, technical and other general qualifications in 2022** from Ofqual (regulator) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/vocational-technical-and-other-general-qualifications-in-2022>)
- **GCSE, AS and A level qualifications in 2022** from Ofqual (regulator) ([www.gov.uk/government/collections/gcse-as-and-a-level-qualifications-in-2022](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/gcse-as-and-a-level-qualifications-in-2022))
- **education and childcare: coronavirus** from Welsh Government (<https://gov.wales/education-coronavirus>)

### General contingency guidance

- **emergency planning and response** ([www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings)) from the Department for Education in England
- **school organisation: local-authority-maintained schools** from the Department for Education in England ([www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools))

- **exceptional closure days** ([www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days)) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- **checklist - exceptional closure of schools** ([www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools)) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- **school terms and school closures** from NI Direct ([www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/school-terms-and-school-closures](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/school-terms-and-school-closures))
- **opening schools in extremely bad weather** (<https://gov.wales/opening-schools-extremely-bad-weather-guidance-schools>) - guidance for schools from the Welsh Government
- **bomb threats** procedures for handling bomb threats from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office ([www.gov.uk/government/publications/crowded-places-guidance/bomb-threats](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/crowded-places-guidance/bomb-threats))

### 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 the JCQ Joint Contingency Plan for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland ([www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents/jcq-joint-contingency-plan/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents/jcq-joint-contingency-plan/))

### 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 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' ([www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations/)).
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.

### **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.

### **Steps the awarding organisation should take**

#### **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.

#### **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 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 ([www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/))

### 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 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.

## Widespread national disruption to the 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.

## JCQ

JCQ guidance taken directly from **Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2021-2022** ([www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations/)) section 15, **Contingency planning**

15.1 The qualification regulators, awarding bodies and government departments responsible for education have prepared and agreed information for schools and colleges in the event of examinations being seriously disrupted. This jointly agreed information will ensure consistency of response in the event of major disruption to the examinations system affecting significant numbers of candidates.

Further information may be found at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-if-exams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted](http://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* - [www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland](http://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 that there is 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 was agreed to reschedule the examinations and the affected candidates will be expected to make themselves available in such circumstances. The decision regarding the re-scheduling of examinations will always rest with the awarding body. The centre must conduct the examination on the scheduled date unless instructed to do otherwise by the awarding body.

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.

## **Links to other JCQ documentation**

JCQ Joint Contingency Plan - [jqc.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents](https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents)

General Regulations for Approved Centres - [jqc.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations](https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations)

Guidance notes on alternative site arrangements - [jqc.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms](https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms)

Guidance notes for transferred candidates - [jqc.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms](https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms)

Instructions for Conducting Examinations - [jqc.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations](https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations)

A guide to the special consideration process - [jqc.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance](https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance)

## **GOV.UK**

(updated 2021/22) Emergency planning and response: Severe weather; Exam disruption; Coronavirus (COVID-19) - [gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings)

School organisation: local-authority-maintained schools  
- [gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools)

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

## **NATIONAL COUNTER TERRORISM SECURITY OFFICE**

Guidance - Bomb Threats - [www.gov.uk/government/publications/crowded-places-guidance/bomb-threats](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/crowded-places-guidance/bomb-threats)