



400 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

## Exam Contingency Plan

<b>Policy approval date</b>	<b>February 2024</b>
<b>Policy review date</b>	<b>February 2025</b>
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<b>Governor or SLT approval</b>	<b>SLT</b>
<b>Governor committee responsible for policy</b>	<b>N/A</b>

This plan has been adapted from the Exams Office and will be reviewed and updated annually to ensure that exam contingency planning at Richard Hale School is managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations.

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## **Purpose of the plan**

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exam process.

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 at Richard Hale School.

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', the **JCQ Joint Contingency Plan** for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the JCQ document **Preparing for disruption to examinations** (Effective from 1 September 2023).

This plan details how Richard Hale School complies with the JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres** (section 5.3, Centre management) by having 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 where the head of centre, examinations officer or SENCo is absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle. 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.

## **Operating across more than one centre**

Not Applicable

## **National Centre Number Register and other information requirements**

The head of centre will also ensure that as a contingency to enable the prompt handling of urgent issues only, responds to the awarding bodies' request for information regarding the contact details of a senior member of staff (which might include a personal mobile number and/or email address). This will ensure that any urgent matters which might adversely affect candidates which arise outside of term time, and which potentially put qualification awards at risk, can be addressed by awarding bodies with the support of that member of staff.

Heads of centre should ensure that this member of staff has the necessary authority to mobilise resources to provide this support, which might include resolving issues within the centre itself. (GR 5.3)

## **Head of centre absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle**

In the event of the Headteacher's absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle, the Senior Leader with responsibility for exams will take over his role.

Possible causes of disruption to the exam process:

## **1. Exams officer absence at critical stage in the exam process (exam 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 post-results services

### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

Identify a competent invigilator to be trained in the essential aspects of the examinations module of Sims and to be the second eye check in certain circumstances.

### **2. SENCo extended absence at critical stage in the exam process (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 listed above**

The centre will:

Ensure there is sufficient backup in the identification of students with access arrangement requirements and to identify a suitable outside agency to complete the assessment of these students.

### **3. Teaching staff extended absence at critical stage in the exam process (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 listed above**

The centre will:

Centre will ensure there are sufficient departmental meetings where student achievements are discussed so there is an accurate record of their current attainment.

#### **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 listed above

The centre will:

- *Post Invigilator Vacancies on the school website*
- *Notify Parents of Invigilator Vacancies*
- *Have regular update training sessions*

#### **5. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venue(s) 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 listed above**

The centre will:

- (where main exam venue(s) unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time)  
Our school is housed in 3 separate buildings. If one building was unusable due to fire or flooding, we could close that part of the school. We would send up to two year groups home and teach them remotely via Google Classroom. We would hold exams in one of the other buildings, using the freed up classrooms, and large venues such as the 6th Form Study Centre, gym, Dining Hall and Drama Studio for candidate seating. In the event that all three buildings became unusable, we would look to hold exams in the newly completed Sports Hall.
- identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding body
- where possible, move to alternative venue, prioritising candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned

Alternative venue details:

- Hertford County Council Conference Facilities
- Nearby local school and using their facilities, eg Simon Balle School
- Communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue

Communication details:

- ensure the secure transportation of question papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue

- (after the exam) consider whether any candidate's ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

## **6. Cyber Attack**

### **Criteria for implementation of the plan**

- Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of delivery

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

Revert to standalone mode, as follows:

- Login to exam laptops / PCs, teacher PC and Conference PC using the local account (.\\ex0000)
- Connect Room K printer to teacher PC via USB
- Connect Conference Room printer to Conference Room PC via USB
- Download any digital exam files using backup broadband / 4G
- Copy digital exam files to USB and distribute to exam laptops / PCs
- Scan exam papers to PDF using scanner on Exam Officer PC, copy to USB and distribute as above
- Students will save ExamWritePad files locally, these will be copied to USB once complete, and Exam staff will print them using the Room K PC / Conference Room PC / Exam Officer PC / IT staff PCs

## **7. Failure of IT systems**

### **Criteria for implementation of the plan**

- MIS/IT system failure at final entry deadline
- MIS/IT system failure during exams preparation
- MIS/IT system failure at results release time

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- Identify location for remote working to facilitate the connectivity to exam boards

## **8. Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lockdown)**

### **Criteria for implementation of the plan**

- Whole centre evacuation (or lockdown) 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 listed above**

The centre will:

- refer to and invoke its (exams) emergency evacuation policy/procedure in line with JCQ's 'Centre emergency evacuation procedure' (or its (exams) lockdown policy)



- contact the relevant awarding body as soon as possible and follow its instructions
- where accommodation is limited, prioritise candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- (after the exam) consider whether any candidate's ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

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

### **Criteria for implementation of the plan**

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

### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

- recognise it remains the responsibility of the centre to prepare students, as usual, for examinations
- facilitate alternative methods of learning
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) information relating to alternative methods of learning

Communication details:

- take advice offered by the awarding body regarding alternative arrangements for conducting examinations that may be available
- take advice offered by the awarding body on the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations
- advise candidates, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date

## **10. Candidates may not be able 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 listed above**

The centre will:

- take advice offered by the awarding body on the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations
- discuss alternative arrangements with the awarding body if a candidate misses an exam or loses their assessment due to an emergency, or other event, outside of the candidate's control

- identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding body, ensuring the secure transportation of questions papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue

Communication details:

- consider whether any candidates' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

**11. Centre may not be able to open as normal during the examination 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 listed above**

The centre will:

- take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether the centre is able to open
- contact the relevant awarding body as soon as possible and follow its instructions.
- discuss alternative arrangements with the awarding body if the exam or assessment cannot take place
- follow guidance provided by the awarding body on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances
- where accommodation is limited, prioritise candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue

Alternative venue details:

- Our school is housed in 3 separate buildings. If one building was unusable due to fire or flooding, we could close that part of the school. We would send up to two year groups home and teach them remotely via Google Classroom. We would hold exams in one of the other buildings, using the freed-up classrooms, and large venues such as the 6th Form Study Centre, gym, Dining Hall and Drama Studio for candidate seating. In the event that all three buildings became unusable, we would look to hold exams in the newly completed Sports Hall.
- If the whole site were compromised, we would look to hold the exams in the County Offices across the road from us, or to use a local school, ensuring our candidates were supervised until such time as we would be able to use the other school's facilities.
- This could include implementing alternative arrangements for the conducting of examinations and notifying the JCQ Centre Inspection Service of an alternative site arrangement by submitting the JCQ Alternative Site form online, using the Centre Admin Portal (CAP).

Communication details:

- consider whether any candidates' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

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

### **Criteria for implementation of the plan**

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- liaise with awarding bodies regarding the provision of electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network and will ensure when copies are received/made these are stored under secure conditions
- follow guidance provided by the awarding body on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances
- understand that as a last resort, and in close collaboration with centres and regulators, awarding organisations will consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue

## **13. 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 listed above

The centre will:

- where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding bodies arrange collections, seek advice from awarding organisations and will not make its own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding organisation
- for any examinations where the centre makes its own arrangements for transportation, investigate alternative dispatch options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ's **Instructions for Conducting Examinations**
- ensure the secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection

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

##### **Criteria for implementation of the plan**

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

##### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

- liaise with the awarding body to determine if candidate marks for affected assessments may be able to be generated based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding body
- where marks cannot be generated by awarding body, inform candidates they may need to retake the affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series

#### **15. Centre unable to distribute results as normal (including in the event of the centre being unavailable on results day owing to an unforeseen emergency) or facilitate post-results services**

##### **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 listed above**

The centre will:

- make arrangements to access its results at alternative venue/share facilities with another centre if this is possible, in agreement with the relevant awarding body
- make arrangements to coordinate access to post results services from an alternative venue

Alternative venue details:

- make arrangements to make post results requests at an alternative location
- contact the relevant awarding body if electronic post results requests are not possible
- inform candidates of any alternative arrangements in place for the distribution of results and the facilitation of post-results services

Communication details:

- Details of Results collection arrangements and Post Results Services will be published on the school website under Learning / Examinations

**16. Any other cause of disruption to the exam process**

Cause of disruption

No other actions identified

**Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

Not applicable