



THOMAS ALLEYNE'S HIGH SCHOOL
UTTOXETER

Examination Contingency Plan 2020/2022

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Managing and Resources Committee 11 th May 2021	
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Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the management and administration of the exam process at Thomas Alleyne's High 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.

All awarding organisations are required to have their own well-established contingency plans in place to respond to such disruptions. This Examination Contingency Plan takes into account these processes and procedures and is designed to complement them, not replace them. This also applies to all other qualifications at Thomas Alleyne's High School.

The plan will be implemented in the event of major disruption to the system, such as widespread illness, travel disruption, bad weather or power failures. Any actions taken will be subject to the advice of the official agencies dealing with the specific circumstances being faced, for example the police, Environment Agency or Health Protection Agency.

Implementing the plan will safeguard the interests of candidates while maintaining the integrity of the examination system and safeguarding qualification standards.

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by scenarios contained in the *Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*.

This plan complies with JCQ general regulations (section 5) in that:

The centre agrees to "have in place a written examination contingency plan/examinations policy which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to have a robust contingency plan in place, minimising risk to examination administration, should the examinations officer be absent at a crucial stage of the examination cycle;"

Communication

In the event of localised disruption communication to teachers and students will take place through the SLT and Exams Officer following agreement with the Headteacher. In the event of major disruption, details of specific contingencies agreed across organisations involved in the examinations process will be confirmed on the Ofqual website and proactively communicated to relevant stakeholders.

This includes communication between the organisations involved in the response and communications to stakeholders such as centres, candidates, parents or carers and the public.

The organisations involved in this Joint Contingency Plan are committed to:

- Sharing timely and accurate information as required to meet the aims of the plan
- Communicating with stakeholders so they are aware of disruption to the exams, the contingency measures being implemented and any actions required of them as a result
- Ensuring any messages to the public are clear and accurate.

Causes of potential 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 and trained
- *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*
 - exam timetabling, rooming allocation; and invigilation schedules not prepared
 - candidates not briefed on exam timetables and awarding body information for candidates
 - exam/assessment materials and candidates' work not stored under required secure conditions
 - internal assessment marks and samples of candidates' work not submitted to awarding bodies/external moderators
- *Exam time*
 - exams/assessments not taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding bodies
 - required reports/requests not submitted to awarding bodies during exam/assessment periods e.g. very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration
 - candidates' scripts not dispatched as required 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:

- Headteacher to nominate a member of the admin team to take over responsibilities should absence of EO have the potential to affect the meeting of deadlines.
- Nominated member of staff to work closely with EO in order to ensure familiarity with the process

2. SENDCo 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
 - 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
 - modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline
 - staff providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained
- *Exam time*
 - access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms

Centre actions:

- Assistant SENDCO to step up and ensure all appropriate preparations are made including access arrangements.

3. Disruption to public transport preventing students from reaching the Examination Centre

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

- *Candidates unable to take examinations due to planned lack of public transport.*
- *Candidates unable to take examinations due to sudden disruption to public transport.*
- *Candidates arrive late due to public transport problems.*

Centre actions:

- Monitor news agencies on a regular basis to identify any potential transportation difficulties.
- Centre to utilise own bus facilities to transport candidates to centre.
- Centre to liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with the relevant awarding organisations.
- Centres to offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series.
- Centres to apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements.
- Latecomers to be permitted to take their examinations providing they are within the JCQ regulations.

4. 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*
- *Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet submission deadlines*

Centre actions:

- EO responsible for ensuring deadlines are met for submission of grades for NEA. Any omissions to be referred to line manager
- Headteacher to prioritise examination cohort when arranging cover and reassigning timetable commitments
- EO to coordinate with relevant HoD, or Assistant HoD in the HoD's absence in order to ensure entries are correct and all necessary grades and documentation is submitted

5. 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:

- EO is responsible for the recruitment of invigilators in the autumn term of the summer series.
- Line Manager/Bursar/Head Teacher to be informed if recruitment is necessary
- Communicate to all staff that in an emergency it may be necessary to use staff other than invigilators to ensure exams are fully supervised. All staff should be aware of exam regulations for the correct running of an exam

6. 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:

- EO to ensure room planning is completed by the end of the spring term in order to identify and potential rooming issues
- Alternative venues to be made available by teaching staff to ensure exams proceed
- EO to work with Cover Manager to identify viable alternatives
- Some classes to be collapsed in order to free up rooms for exams
- Agency/Middle and Senior staff to invigilate as available if invigilators cannot be called in at short notice
- **EO to liaise with HOC and outside personnel to utilise alternative nearby venues**
- **EO to contact Awarding Bodies to apply for use of alternative venues**

7. Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre actions:

- EO to contact awarding bodies to arrange alternative methods of information exchange
- Head teacher to be informed
- Network manager to liaise with county support in order to resolve any issue as quickly as possible.
- EO to work with Network manager to implement redundant systems as back up if required

8. Cyber Security

The Department for Education and the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) has been made aware of an increasing number of cyber-attacks involving ransomware infections affecting the education sector recently. It is important that senior leaders in education settings understand the nature of the threat and the potential for ransomware to cause considerable damage to their institutions in terms of lost data (including evidence required to support this year's teacher assessed grades – Summer 2021) and access to critical services.

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- MIS system is affected by a cyber-attack

Centre actions:

- Network Manager/IT department to back up data (including evidence to support teacher assessed grades)
- The backups are held offline
- Systems for restoring services and recovering data from the backups are tested and reliable
- In the event of an attack the Centre will enact the 'Incident Management Plan'
- Contact the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC)
- Contact the local law enforcement and Action Fraud
- Inform the DfE by emailing: securityenquiries@education.gov.uk

9. 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

The centre to communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this.

Centre actions:

- Head teacher responsible for sourcing alternative venues if school closed for a protracted time
- Exam cohort to be prioritised when sourcing alternative venues
- Communication with students and parents via Round up, Frog and Web site, coordinated by Network manager
- Staff deliver on-line lessons, live and recorded, teaching and learning materials/resources are uploaded for students to access remotely
- HOC and centre staff support students to enable on-line access to lessons

10. 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

The centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue. The centre to communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issue.

Centre actions:

- Procedures for absence followed as outlined in the documentation provided on Frog and the web site. Students' attention drawn to these procedures during examination briefing assembly
- EO to liaise with student and/or parent to advise of alternative venue or next opportunity to sit the exam
- EO to advise student and parents of process for application for special consideration

11. Centre unable to open as normal during the exams period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations

A centre which is unable to open as normal for examinations must inform each awarding organisation with which examinations are due to be taken as soon as is possible.

Centre actions:

- Centre to open for examination candidates only if possible
- Centre to arrange alternative venues, in agreement with awarding bodies
- Students offered the opportunity to sit the exam at the next examination season
- Centres to follow guidance from Ofqual/DfE

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:

- The EO to communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery of papers.
- Head teacher to be informed

13. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

The centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to resolve the issue.

Centre actions:

- EO to communicate with awarding bodies for approval of alternative delivery arrangements

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

It is the responsibility of the head of centre to communicate this immediately to the relevant awarding organisation(s) and subsequently to students and their parents or carers.

Centre actions:

- EO to communicate with awarding bodies immediately
- Students' marks to be submitted based on available evidence
- Candidate offered the opportunity to retake in subsequent series

15. Centre unable to distribute results as normal

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

Centres to contact awarding organisations about alternative options.

Centre actions:

- EO and Head Teacher to assess alternative arrangements for issuing results with the regulators
- Head Teacher to inform Sixth Form, College provision and other post 16 providers about delay as soon as possible

Causes 7-13 – all scenarios, criteria and specific communications have been taken directly from the *Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*

What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted

1. Contingency planning

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

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

1.1 Covid specific guidance:

- [Guidance for schools Covid-19](#) from the Department for Education in England (subject to frequent updates as the situation changes)
- [Public health guidance to support autumn exams](#) from the Department for Education

1.2 General contingency guidance

- [Emergency planning and response](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [Opening and closing local-authority-maintained schools](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [Procedures for handling bomb threats](#) from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office.

2. Disruption to assessments or exams

In the absence of any instruction from the relevant awarding organisation, you should make sure that any exam or timetabled assessment takes place if it is possible to hold it. This may mean relocating to alternative premises.

You should discuss alternative arrangements with your awarding organisation if:

- the exam or assessment cannot take place
- a student misses an exam or loses their assessment due to an emergency, or other event, outside of the student's control

See also:

- [JCQ Joint Contingency Plan for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland](#)

3. Steps you should take

3.1 Exam planning

Review contingency plans well in advance of each exam or assessment series. Consider how, if the contingency plan is invoked, you will comply with the awarding organisation's requirements.

3.2 In the event of disruption

1. Contact the relevant awarding organisation and follow its instructions.
2. Take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether your centre is able to open.
3. Identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation, ensuring the secure transportation of questions papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue.
4. Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned.
5. In the event of an evacuation during an examination please refer to JCQ's [Centre emergency evacuation procedure](#).
6. Communicate with parents, carers and students any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.
7. Communicate with any external assessors or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable.

3.3 After the exam

1. Consider whether any students' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration.
2. Advise students, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date.
3. Ensure that scripts are stored under secure conditions.

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

4. Steps the awarding organisation should take

4.1 Exam planning

1. Establish and maintain, and at all times comply with, an up-to-date, written contingency plan.
2. Ensure that the arrangements in place with centres and other third parties enable them to deliver and award qualifications in accordance with their conditions of recognition.

4.2 In the event of disruption

- Take all reasonable steps to mitigate any adverse effect, in relation to their qualifications, arising from any disruption.
- Provide effective guidance to any of their centres delivering qualifications.
- Ensure that where an assessment must be completed under specified conditions, students complete the assessment under those conditions (other than where any reasonable adjustments or special considerations require alternative conditions).
- Promptly notify the relevant regulators about any event which could have an adverse effect on students, standards or public confidence.
- Coordinate its communications with the relevant regulators where the disruption has an impact on multiple centres or a wide range of learners.

4.3 After the exam

Consider any requests for special consideration for affected students. For example, those who may have lost their internally assessed work or whose performance in assessments or exams could have been affected by the disruption.

5. If any students miss an exam or are disadvantaged by the disruption

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

Decisions about special consideration, when it is or is not appropriate, is for each awarding organisation to make. Their decisions might be different for different qualifications and for different subjects.

See also:

- [JCQ's guidance on special considerations](#)

6. Wider communications

The regulators, [Ofqual](#) in England, [Qualifications Wales](#) in Wales and [CCEA](#) in Northern Ireland, will share timely and accurate information, as required, with awarding organisations, government departments and other stakeholders.

The [Department for Education](#) in England, the [Department of Education](#) in Northern Ireland and the [Welsh Government](#) will inform the relevant government ministers as soon as it becomes apparent that there will be significant local or national disruption; and ensure that they are kept updated until the matter is resolved.

Awarding organisations will alert the [Universities and Colleges Admissions Service](#) (UCAS) and the [Central Applications Office](#) (CAO) about any impact of the disruption on their deadlines and liaise regarding student progression to further and higher education.

Awarding organisations will alert relevant professional bodies or employer groups if the impact of disruption particularly affects them.

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

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.

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.

Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning

Ofqual

Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/joint-contingency-plan-in-the-event-of-widespread-disruption-to-the-examination-system-in-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

JCQ

General regulations

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations>

Guidance on alternative site arrangements

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/forms>

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

Emergencies and severe weather: schools and early years settings

<https://www.gov.uk/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/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/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-guide>