



THOMAS ALLEYNE'S HIGH SCHOOL
UTTOXETER

Examination Contingency Plan 2023/2024

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Managing and Resources Committee May 2023	
Date of next review	May 2024

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Key staff involved in the plan

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	Mrs Julie Rudge
Exams officer line manager (Senior leader)	Mrs Louise Wainwright
Exams officer	Mrs Beverley Sosinski
ALS/SENCo	Mrs Sharon Oliver
Senior leader(s)	Mr Damian Godwin

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 also confirms compliance with JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres (section 5.3) in that the centre has 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 act immediately in the event of an*

emergency or staff absence. The examination contingency plan should reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations, or on results day, owing to an unforeseen emergency.

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*
- *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 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 any 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 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
- 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
- Inform the impacted exam board/s.

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, Talaxy, schoolcoms and Web site, coordinated by SLT.
- 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 Talaxy 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

Awarding organisations are required to establish, maintain and comply with an up to date detailed written contingency plan, to mitigate any incident they have identified may occur. This includes having communication plans for external parties (Ofqual General Condition of Recognition A6). Schools and colleges should also be prepared for possible disruption to exams and assessments and make sure staff are aware of these plans.

1.1 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
- [Police guidance](#) from National Counter Terrorism Security Office and partners on preparing for threats.

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
- You may also wish to see the [JCQs notice to centres on exam contingency plans](#) and [JCQs notice on preparing for disruption to examinations](#) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland for qualifications within its scope

3. Steps you should take

3.1 Exam planning

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

3.2 In the event of disruption

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

3.3 After the exam

1. Consider whether any students' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration.
2. Advise students, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date.
3. Ensure that scripts are stored under secure conditions.
4. Return scripts to awarding organisations in line with their instructions. Never make alternative

arrangements for the transportation of completed exam scripts, unless told to do so by the awarding organisation.

4. Steps the awarding organisation should take

4.1 Exam planning

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

4.2 In the event of disruption

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

4.3 After the exam

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

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

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

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

See also:

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

6. Wider communications

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

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

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

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

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

The governments' view across England, Wales and Northern Ireland is education in to 2023 has returned to normal. Schools are open and examinations will go ahead in summer 2023

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 examinations and assessments, including exam timetables.

In November 2022, Ofqual and the Department for Education issued [decisions following a consultation on the resilience of the qualifications sector](#) for specific examinations awarded in England in summer 2023. Ofqual has published [Guidance for schools, colleges and other exam centres on gathering evidence of student performance](#) for students entering GCSEs, AS and A levels, the Advanced Extension Award and Project qualifications to support resilience in the exam system in England in 2023.

We will update this page as necessary, with any further relevant links, should national disruption occur.

(Ofqual guidance extract above taken directly from the Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland - **What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted** (last updated 30 November 2022)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-if-exams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted>)

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

Further information may be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

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 'contingency days' for examinations, summer 2023. This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document *Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland*: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

The designation of 'contingency days' within the common examination timetable is in the event of national or significant local disruption to examinations. It is part of the awarding bodies' standard contingency planning for examinations.

In the event of national disruption to a day of examinations in summer 2023, 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 last contingency day. Centres will be alerted if it is agreed to reschedule the examinations and the affected candidates will be expected to make themselves available in such circumstances. The decision regarding the rescheduling of examinations will always rest with the awarding body. The centre must conduct the examination on the scheduled date unless instructed to do otherwise by the awarding body.

Where candidates choose not to be available for the rescheduled examination(s) for reasons other than those traditionally covered by special consideration, they will not be eligible for enhanced grading arrangements. Centres must therefore ensure candidates and parents are aware of the contingency arrangements so that they may take them into account when making their plans for the summer. However, the awarding bodies will not insist upon candidates being available throughout the entire timetable period as a matter of course.

(JCQ guidance above taken directly from **Instructions for conducting examinations** 2022-2023 <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>, section 15, Contingency planning)

JCQ Joint Contingency Plan www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents

JCQ notice - Preparing for disruption to examinations (effective from 11 October 2021) www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents

JCQ Notice to Centres - Examination contingency plan/examinations policy www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/notice-to-centres--exam-contingency-plan/

General Regulations for Approved Centres www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations

Guidance notes on alternative site arrangements www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms

Guidance notes for transferred candidates www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms

Instructions for conducting examinations www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations

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

GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response; Exam and assessment disruption www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings

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

Wales

School closures: examinations gov.wales/school-closures-examinations

Opening schools in extremely bad weather: guidance for schools gov.wales/opening-schools-extremely-bad-weather-guidance-schools

Northern Ireland

Exceptional closure days www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days

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

ProtectUK

www.protectuk.police.uk

National Cyber Security Centre

The NCSC's free [Web Check](#) and [Mail Check](#) services can help protect schools from cyber-attacks. Two NCSC cyber security services, which are already helping thousands of organisations to protect their websites and email servers from cyber-attacks, are now available to **all UK schools**. Both tools are available free of charge, are quick to set up, and thereafter run automatically. More information is available from the [NCSC website](#).

The Department for Education has been asking centres to review **National Cyber Security Centre advice** following increasing number of cyber-attacks involving ransomware infections. The NCSC information supports centres in cyber security preparedness and mitigation work.

Ransomware attacks continue and the Department is reminding centres to review the NCSC advice and to take precautions. This includes ensuring that you have backups in place for your key services and data.

For ease of reference, the Department has highlighted key links relating to the NCSC cyber security guidance below:

1. [More ransomware attacks on UK education - NCSC.GOV.UK](#)
2. [Ransomware advice and guidance for your IT teams to implement](#)
3. [Offline backups in an online world](#)
4. [Backing up your data](#)
5. [Practical resources to help improve your cyber security](#)
6. [Building Resilience: Ransomware and the risks to schools and ways to prevent it](#)
7. [School staff offered training to help shore up cyber defences - NCSC.GOV.UK](#)