



# Whitby School

## Exams Contingency Plan

### **School Governance Status**

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations.

<b>Review dates</b>	<b>By Whom</b>	<b>Approval date</b>
February 2023	Staff and Governors	21 February 2023
February 2024	Staff and Governors	7 May 2024
February 2025	Staff and Governors	1 April 2025
January 2026	Staff and Governors	March 2026

**Signed by the Chair:**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rafina'.

## Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	Susan Boyd
Exams officer line manager (Data Manager)	Nick Tindall
Exams officer	Gill Teasdale
SENCo	Hazel Kirk
SLT member(s)	Julie Caddell
	Andrew Whelan

### Purpose of the Plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the examination and assessment process at Whitby School. By outlining actions/procedures to be invoked in case of disruption it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on our processes.

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by the Ofqual (and Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment) **Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland** which provides guidance in the document *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**.

This plan also confirms Whitby School compliance with JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres** (GR 5.3) that the centre has in place for inspection that must be reviewed and updated annually by a member of the SLT and communicated within the centre:

- a written contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination/assessment administration  
Contingency arrangements

### **Contingency arrangements**

In accordance with the regulations (GR 3.17-19), Whitby School **must** have an up to date written contingency plan.

The contingency plan **must** cover all aspects of examination/assessment administration and delivery. Senior leaders **must** have robust contingency arrangements in place that will minimise the risk to examination/assessment administration and delivery and any adverse impact on candidates.

The plan must cover the following scenarios:

- the head of centre, relevant senior leader(s) with oversight of examination and assessment administration, SENCo (or equivalent role), examinations officer or any other key staff essential to the examination process being absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle
- the potential impact of other events such as flooding which could lead to all or parts of the centre becoming unavailable
- potential issues with the centre's IT systems

As part of the contingency plan the centre must identify an alternative site if examinations cannot be conducted at the registered address. Larger centres may require more than one potential alternative site or different sites for different year groups. The alternative site is **Airy Hill Site (AHS)**.

Whitby School **must** have at least one senior member of staff (senior designated contact) who is available to manage emergency requests from awarding bodies that are results related during the summer holidays. However, a number of contacts can be provided to reduce the risk of this falling on one individual throughout the summer holidays.

Whitby School **must** ensure that candidates' work is produced electronically it is backed-up and should consider the contingency of candidates' work being backed-up on two separate devices, including one off-site back-up via the Cloud. Appropriate security arrangements must be implemented which protect candidates' work in the event of IT system corruption and cyber-attacks.

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

In accordance with the regulations (GR 5.3), the head of centre will ensure that Whitby School completes the National Centre Number Register annual update by the end of October every year (even if there are no changes to centre details) which includes providing senior designated contact details (this might include a personal mobile number and/or email address). These must be the contact details of someone who can be reached in an emergency if the centre is closed over the summer and who can mobilise resources to respond to the issue.

Head of centre/senior leader(s) with oversight of examination and assessment administration absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle

- Where the head of centre/senior leader may be absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle, main duties and responsibilities will be escalated in accordance with the centre's written escalation process].

## **Causes of Potential Disruption to the Exam Process:**

### **1. Exam Officer 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 exam cycle not undertaken including:

#### **Planning:**

- annual data collection exercise not undertaken to collate information on qualifications and awarding body specifications being delivered - *Head of Centre to identify with Head of Departments.*
- annual exams plan not produced identifying essential key tasks, key dates and deadlines – *Essential Key Dates Planner on the wall in the Exams office. Electronic copy also in the Contingency Plan folder in*

- insufficient invigilators not recruited and trained – *Head of Centre to discuss with Lead Invigilator. Use LSA's and mentors. Complete Exams Office Online Training Modules.*

### **Entries:**

- awarding bodies not being informed of early/estimated entries which prompts release of early information required by teaching staff – *Head of Centre to contact exam boards ASAP for guidance.*
- candidates not being entered with awarding bodies for external exams/assessment – *Details of how to make entries on Bromcon can be found in the Bromcon Exams Admin Guide – see Data Manager for assistance.*
- awarding body entry deadlines missed or late or other penalty fees being incurred – *Allowance to be made in the Exams Budget*

### **Pre-exams:**

- exam timetabling, rooming allocation; and invigilation schedules not prepared – *Data Manager to produce timetables. Office Manager to allocate rooms. Head of Centre to discuss schedules with Lead Invigilator.*
- candidates not briefed on exam timetables and awarding body information for candidates – *Head of Centre to discuss with candidates ASAP. Update Exam Information Booklet (in Exams Area – if not already done) and give to candidates. up to date JCQ information can also be found in the Contingency Plan folder \**
- confidential exam/assessment materials and candidates' work not stored under required secure conditions – *Responsibility of Head of Centre.*
- internal assessment marks and samples of candidates' work not submitted to awarding bodies/external moderators – *Head of Centre to contact exam boards ASAP for guidance. Collate any relevant information from Head of Departments.*

### **Exam Time:**

- exams/assessments not taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding bodies – *Head of Centre to follow the JCQ Guidelines for Conducting Exams (yellow booklet – copy in Exams Office). Candidates with Access Arrangements – follow guidelines in JCQ orange booklet (SENCo to direct). Electronic copies of booklets in the Contingency Plan folder\*.*
- required reports/requests not submitted to awarding bodies during exam/assessment periods e.g. very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration – *Head of Centre to contact exams boards ASAP for guidance.*
- candidates' scripts not dispatched as required to awarding bodies – *Head of Centre to contact exams boards ASAP for guidance. Contact Parcelforce to re-schedule pickup if necessary. Exams Assistant to support.*

### **Results and Post-results:**

- access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates – *See Data Manager. Candidate Results can be accessed online on exam board secure websites and printed. Exams Assistant to support.*

- the facilitation of the post-results services – *Head of Centre to arrange. Information regarding Review of in the Contingency Plan folder*

## **2. SENCo Extended Absence at Key Points in the Exam Cycle**

Criteria for implementation of the plan - key tasks required in the management and administration of the access arrangements process within the exam cycle not undertaken including:

### **Planning:**

- candidates not tested/assessed to identify potential access arrangement requirements – *SEN administrator directs Specialist Teacher/Assessor*
- evidence of need and evidence to support normal way of working not collated – *SEN administrator to direct Specialist Teacher/Assessor to complete*

### **Pre-exams:**

- approval for access arrangements not applied for to the awarding body – *Specialist Teacher/Assessor to advise SEN administrator/ Exams Office*
- modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline – *Exams Office to contact relevant exam board for guidance*
- staff providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained – *Head of Centre to advise*

### **Exam time:**

- access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms – *Exams Officer to address as soon as possible. Contact relevant exam board for guidance. Ensure support in place for future exams.*

## **3. Teaching staff (or other key staff essential to the examination process) extended absence at a critical stage of 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

*Exams Officer to liaise with Head of Centre to resolve issues and contact exam boards for guidance.*

## **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

*Use LSA's and mentors to cover shortfall – will have already been trained as part of the College's Invigilator Training. Advertise for new invigilators as soon as possible. Complete Exams Office Online Training Module.*

## **5. Exam rooms - Lack of Appropriate Rooms or Main Venues Unavailable at Short Notice**

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

- Exams officer unable to identify sufficient/appropriate rooms during exams timetable planning
- Insufficient rooms available on peak exam days
- Main exam venues unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time

*Head of Centre to prioritise rooming for examinations and have arranged classes moved to other areas Use of AHS site if necessary – subject to JCQ approval*

## **6. Cyber security**

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

- Where any incidents might compromise any aspect of assessment delivery such as a cyber-attack

*Ensure there are procedures in place to maintain the security of user accounts by:*

- a) *ensuring that all members of centre staff who access awarding bodies' online systems undertake annual cyber security training...*

*... The training must include:*

- *the importance of creating strong, unique passwords for all accounts;*
- *keeping all account details strictly confidential;*
- *the critical role of Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) in protecting against unauthorised access;*
- *how to properly set up and use MFA for both centre and awarding bodies' systems;*
- *an awareness of all types of social engineering/phishing attempts;...*
- *the importance of staff quickly reporting any suspicious activity, events, incidents and encouraging a safe and supportive reporting culture.*

*Certificates of completed staff cyber training must be downloaded and held on file for inspection. The NCSC training resource provides a certificate of completion of cyber training.*

- b) *developing and maintaining a comprehensive cyber security policy for the centre. The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) provides resources to assist centres in creating such policies;*

c) *implementing and enforcing robust security measures, including:*

- *mandatory MFA for all accounts and systems containing exam-related information, including those that interface between awarding body and centre systems, to enhance security and protect sensitive data;*
- *regularly reviewing and updating security settings to align with current best practices;*

d) *updating any passwords that may have been exposed*

e) *setting up secure account recovery options*

- f) *reviewing and managing connected applications*
- g) *monitoring accounts and regularly reviewing account access, including removing access when no longer required*
- h) *ensuring authorised members of staff securely access awarding bodies' online systems in line with awarding body regulations regarding cyber security and the JCQ document Guidance for centres on cyber security*

*Authorised staff will have access, where necessary, to a device which complies with awarding bodies' MFA requirements.*

- i) *reporting any actual or suspected compromise of an awarding body's online systems immediately to the relevant awarding body*

## **7. Failure of IT Systems**

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

- IT system corruption affecting candidates' work
- MIS system failure at final entry deadline
- MIS system failure during exams preparation
- Power outage immediately prior to or during an on-screen test
- MIS system failure at results release time

See Data Manager and IT Technician - ICT System is backed up on a regular basis.

*Ensure where candidates' work is produced electronically that it is backed-up and should consider the contingency of candidates' work being backed-up on two separate devices, including one off-site back-up via the Cloud... Implement appropriate security arrangements which protect candidates' work in the event of IT system corruption and cyber-attacks.*

## **8. Emergency Evacuation of the Exams Room (or Centre Lockdown)**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Whole centre evacuation (or lock down) during exam time due to serious incident resulting in exam candidates being unable to start, proceed with or complete their exams

*Whitby School has a separate policy for emergency evacuation/Lockdown which details actions to be taken in the event of an emergency. Special consideration to be sought if appropriate*

## **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

*Exams Officer to contact exams boards for guidance. Head of Centre to communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this. Agreement to be made for teaching to be undertaken on the AHS site.*

## **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

*Exams Officer to contact relevant exam board at the outset to make them aware of the issue and make suitable temporary arrangement. Arrange alternative centre if appropriate*  
*Head of Centre to communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issue.*  
*Apply for Special Consideration if applicable.*

### **11. Whitby School Unable to Open as Normal During the Exams Period (including in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations due to unforeseen emergency)**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Candidates are unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal

*Exams Officer to contact exams boards ASAP for guidance*  
*Head of Centre to advise candidates and parent/carers of situation*  
*Special consideration to be sought*

### **12. Disruption in the Distribution of Examination Scripts**

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

- Disruption to the distribution of examination papers to the centre in advance of examinations –  
*Exams Officer/ Head of Centre to contact relevant exam board. Scripts can be downloaded, copied and kept securely. If security measured has been compromised, the centre would inform the relevant exam board immediately.*

### **13. Disruption to the Transportation of Completed Examination Scripts**

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

- Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts – Exams Officer/Head of Centre to advise the relevant exam boards immediately.

*Contact Parcellforce to ensure they are aware of the situation and have made arrangements for the collection. Scripts to be kept under secure conditions 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 – Exams Officer to advise the relevant exam board immediately.

*Head of Centre to contact students and their parents/carers. Teachers to check for any electronic/paper evidence to support missing work. Work to be backed up regularly on ICT system which could then be retrieved and sent.*

### **15. Whitby School Unable to Distribute Results as Normal or facilitate post results services including in the event of the centre being unavailable on results day owing to an unforeseen emergency)**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates, or to facilitate post-results services – Exams Officer/Head of Centre to contact relevant exam boards for guidance.

*Find alternative site AHS in the first instance. Post results home if information available. IT dept/Data Manager to help resolves issue if an IT issue. Inform students/parents/carers immediately via social media etc*

*IT access made available on an alternative site to undertake post results services as normal.*

## **16. Additional Information**

Policies – electronic copies in Contingency Plan folder\*

Review of Results – Electronic copies in Contingency Plan folder\*

Malpractice – Electronic copies in Contingency Plan folder\*

Exam Contact Details - on the wall in the Exams Office. Electronic copy in Contingency Plan folder\*

AQA	0800 197 7162
Edexcel	03444 632535
OCR	01223 553998
WJEC	02920 265000
Parcelforce	0344 561 7998

# **Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning**

**OFQUAL**

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

This document was updated in October 2023 to include Ofqual's final decisions on long-term resilience arrangements, and the Department for Education (DfE)'s guidance for education settings with confirmed reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC),

In addition to this guidance, you will need to be aware of your specific responsibilities for local and national school preparations and contingencies. You should also follow advice from relevant public health bodies.

### **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.

### **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 [JCQ's notice to centres on exam contingency plans](#) and [JCQ's notice on preparing for disruption to examinations](#) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland for qualifications within its scope.

### **Steps you should take**

#### **Exam planning**

Review your 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.

Schools, colleges and other exam centres must speak to the relevant awarding organisations as soon as possible if they are expecting any disruption that might affect the sitting of exams and assessments.

#### **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 students, parents and carers any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.
7. Communicate with any external assessors, invigilators 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 to the relevant awarding organisation 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 are able to 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, depending on their specific policies.

See also [JCQ's guidance on 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 [DfE 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

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 September 2023, Ofqual and the DfE published [joint consultation decisions on long-term resilience arrangements](#). As in 2023, Ofqual has provided [guidance on collecting evidence of student performance to ensure resilience in the qualifications system](#) for students entering GCSEs, AS and A levels, the Advanced Extension Award and Project qualifications. For VTQs and other qualifications used alongside or instead of GCSEs, AS and A levels, awarding organisations will provide guidance where needed and will contact schools and colleges with more information.

In December 2022, Qualifications Wales published [guidance for contingency assessment arrangements](#) for GCSEs, AS and A levels and Skills Challenge Certificates in the event that a national decision is made to cancel exams. This guidance is still relevant for the current academic year.

The DfE has updated its guidance on [handling strike action in schools](#) in England in light of the industrial action in 2023. The guidance recommends schools should prioritise the running of examinations and assessments on any strike days, and should review their contingency plans to make this happen. Schools, colleges and other exam centres must speak to the relevant awarding organisations if they are expecting any disruption that might affect the sitting of exams and assessments.

The DfE has also issued [guidance for education settings with confirmed reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete \(RAAC\)](#) in their buildings. It includes the need for contingencies for possible disruption to examinations and links to the existing emergency planning guidance.

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

### General contingency guidance

- [emergency planning and response for education, childcare and children's social care settings from the DfE in England](#)

- [handling strike action in schools](#) from the DfE in England
- [school organisation: local-authority-maintained schools](#) from the DfE in England
- [reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete: guidance for education settings with confirmed RAAC](#) from the DfE in England
- [exceptional closure days: Northern Ireland](#) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- [checklist - exceptional closure of schools](#) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- [school terms and school closures](#) from NI Direct
- [opening schools, childcare and play settings in extreme bad weather and extreme hot weather](#) - guidance for schools from the Welsh Government
- [emergency planning and response guidance for education and childcare settings](#)- guidance for schools and education settings from the Welsh Government
  - [protective security and preparedness for education settings](#) from the DfE
- [police guidance](#) from National Counter Terrorism Security Office and partners on preparing for threats
- [cyber security guidance for schools and colleges](#) from the National Cyber Security Centre

(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 7 May 2024)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-if-exams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted>

**JCQ**

## 15. 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:

<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 or bodies.

**15.3** All centres must have 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 owing to an unforeseen emergency.

All relevant centre staff must be familiar with the examination contingency 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** If the head of centre decides the centre cannot be opened for scheduled examinations, the centre's contingency plan must be invoked, utilising the centre's alternative site(s) and the relevant awarding bodies 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 sessions' for examinations, summer 2026. This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document *Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland*.

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

**15.7** In the event of national disruption to a day of examinations in summer 2026, 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.

**15.8** 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.

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

JCQ Preparing for disruption to examinations [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/)

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

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

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

Instructions for conducting examinations

[www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations](http://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](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance)

Guidance for centres on cyber security (Effective from November 2023; Revised July 2025)

[www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/)

5 tips to get exam ready and stay cyber safe! [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/blogs/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/blogs/)

## 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](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings)

Dispatch of exam scripts guide: Contingency planning

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service)

## Wales

School closures: examinations [gov.wales/school-closures-examinations](http://gov.wales/school-closures-examinations)

Opening schools as well as childcare and play settings in extreme bad weather and extreme hot weather:

[www.gov.wales/opening-schools-well-childcare-and-play-settings-extreme-bad-weather-and-extreme-hot-weather](http://www.gov.wales/opening-schools-well-childcare-and-play-settings-extreme-bad-weather-and-extreme-hot-weather)

## Northern Ireland

Exceptional closure days – Northern Ireland

[www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days)

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)

## National Cyber Security Centre

Cyber Security for Schools [www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/education-skills/cyber-security-schools](http://www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/education-skills/cyber-security-schools)

Cyber security training for school staff [www.ncsc.gov.uk/information/cyber-security-training-schools](http://www.ncsc.gov.uk/information/cyber-security-training-schools)