

Cliff Park Ormiston Academy

Exams Contingency Plan

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Policy Version Control

Policy type	Academy produced policy
Policy prepared by (name and department)	Mr S Sorrento (Vice Principal)
Last review date by OAT	December 2024
Description of changes	Changes to key personnel.

Key Staff involved in contingency planning

Head of Centre	H French
Exams Officer	W Rowe
Vice Principal	S Sorrento
Vice Principal (SENCo)	A Waters

Purpose of Plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the management and administration of the exam process at Cliff Park Ormiston Academy. 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.

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by the [Ofqual exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland](#) (May 2024), the [JCQ Joint Contingency Plan for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland](#) and the JCQ document [Preparing for disruption to examinations](#) (September 2024).

This plan also confirms Cliff Park Ormiston Academy is compliant with the [JCQ General Regulation for approved Centres](#) (page 15) that the centre has in place a written examination contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to act immediately in the event of an emergency or where the head of centre, examinations officer or SENCo is absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle. The examination contingency plan should reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations/results day, owing to an unforeseen emergency. The potential impact of a cyberattack should be considered.

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Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning.

Ofqual

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Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

1. Exam officer extended absence at a critical stage of 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.
- 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

- Invigilators not trained or updated on changes to instruction for conducting exams
- Exam timetabling, rooming allocation; and invigilation schedules not prepared.
- Candidates not briefed on exam timetables and awarding body information for candidates.
- Confidential exam/assessment materials and candidates' work not stored under required secure conditions.
- Internal assessment marks and samples of candidates' work not submitted to awarding bodies/external moderators.

Exam Time

- Exams/assessments not taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding bodies.
- Required reports/requests not submitted to awarding bodies during exam/assessment periods
- 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:

- Line Manager, S Sorrento to liaise with L Bullen and J O'Brian over entries.
- Line Manager, S Sorrento, Head of Year 11, CAB Team and Heads of Faculty/Department, and Senior Invigilator to liaise over pre-exam administration.
- Senior Invigilator to liaise with Line Manager regarding exam time issues and results.

2. SENCo extended absence at a critical stage of 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
- Centre fails to recognise its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the equality act 2010.
- Evidence of need and evidence to support normal way of working not collated.

Pre-exams

- Approval for access arrangements not applied for to the awarding body.
- Centre delegated arrangements not put in place
- Modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline.
- Staff providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained.

Exam Time

- Access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms.

Centre actions:

- S Sorrento to liaise with Head of Centre, Exam officer and K Todd (admin support to SENCo) over SENCO absence.
- All centre staff to be aware of the centre's [Equality and Diversity Policy](#).
- TAs will be trained/have a review at the start of each academic year to update access.
- Exam Access Arrangements lists regularly monitored and maintained.
- The Exams Officer will provide a list of all candidates requiring support in a timely fashion before each exam series.

3. Teaching staff 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.
- Final entry information not provided to the exams officer on time.
- Non-examination assessment tasks not set/issued/taken by candidates as scheduled.
- 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:

- Line Manager and Exams Officer to liaise with remaining teaching staff through CAB team.
- The Exams Officer will request final entry information in a timely fashion, this will only be submitted once the Head of Department/Faculty has confirmed in writing it is correct. Entry information for each exam series will be part of the annual data collection exercise.
- All candidates are informed of their centre –assessed marks before they are submitted to the Awarding Bodies as per the centre's Appeals Against Internal Assessments of Work Procedure.

4. Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence.

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Failure to recruit and train sufficient invigilators to conduct exams.
- Invigilator shortage on peak exam days.
- Invigilator absence on the day of an exam.

Centre actions:

- Recruitment and training of invigilators is ongoing and completed well in advance of exam series.
- Training of academy administrative staff and Tas to support with exam invigilation.
- Exams Officer and Senior Invigilator to cover absences or shortages, when required.

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 expected incident at exam time.

Centre actions:

- Ordinarily, the academy's Sports Hall is used for examinations. In an emergency the academy's Gym, Main Assembly Hall and Drama Studio could be utilised for examination purposes.
- The academy has an agreement that Ormiston Cliff Park Primary Academy can be used as an alternative examination venue
- If the above arrangement is not possible, the academy will check accommodation in local schools, including Ormiston Venture Academy and Ormiston Denes Academy.

6. Cyber-attack

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Cyber Attack may compromise the delivery of internal units and uploading of marks to Awarding Body
- Compromising those that require Word processing during the examinations.
- Compromising Results

Centre actions:

- In a cyber-attack IT will disconnect from the internet depending on the severity. All data will then be backed up each day until issue is resolved.
- Ensure entries are final and ready to be sent 5 working days before to the ABs Deadline
- Seating Plans, attendance register checking, and any other preparation required before each exam are printed prior to the exam series commencing.
- Liaise with local Ormiston academies to access their facilities to download results.

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:

- Exams Officer and Data Manager to liaise with Examination Boards as to appropriate action.

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre actions:

- Principal, Governors, SLT to take the necessary action in line with [Fire Safety Policy](#) and lockdown procedures.
- Candidates will be made aware of centre evacuation procedure and of the lockdown policy.

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre actions:

- Principal, Governors, SLT to take the necessary action, including online learning through Teams.
- Online resources made available through, for example, TUTE, GCSEPod.

10. Candidates to take examinations – centre remains open

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre actions:

- Centre will focus on accessing another centre for candidates to take exam.
- Centre will investigate the possibility of candidate sitting exam in an alternative setting, seeking JCQ advice.

11. Centre may not be able to open as normal during the examination period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations.
- 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.

Centre Actions:

- The academy would submit the JCQ Alternative Site form online, using the Centre Admin Portal (CAP). Details shared ([CAP \(Centre Admin Portal\) - JCQ Joint Council for Qualifications](#)) with Exams Officer.
- The academy has an agreement that Ormiston Cliff Park Primary Academy can be used as an alternative examination venue
- If the above arrangement is not possible, the academy will check accommodation in local schools, including Ormiston Venture Academy and Ormiston Denes Academy.

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:

- Record of examination papers received to be maintained by Exams Officer.
- Awarding organisations contacted if examination papers are not received at least two weeks prior to examination date to allow time for further materials to be dispatched.
- Exams Officer to download papers from AB secure website and arrange for adequate amounts of paper to be securely printed in a timely fashion for each exam. Exams Officer to create a checklist to ensure all papers have been received and downloaded in preparation for each exam day.

13. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts. Assessment evidence.

Centre actions:

- Scripts remain securely stored in exams office. Exams Officer to take to the local post office as a last resort.

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.
- Complete examination scripts/assessment evidence does not reach awarding organisations.

Centre actions:

- Exams Officer to contact awarding bodies for advice. Candidates may need to retake affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series. Submit a claim for missing internal assessment.

15. Centre 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.

Centre actions:

- Centre to make arrangements to access its results from an alternative site, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation. Centres to coordinate access to post results from alternative site. Centres to share facilities with other centres if this is possible in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation.
- Centres to make arrangements to make post results at an alternative location and to contact relevant awarding organisation if electronic post results requests are not possible.
- Alternative Venues: Ormiston Cliff Park Primary Academy; Ormiston Venture Academy

Information taken from the Joint contingency plan for the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

DFE

Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges

[Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges](#) (November 2024)

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

See also [JCQ 'Preparing for disruption to examinations'](#)

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, 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](#)
- [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))

JCQ

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/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 In the event that 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 2025. 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 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 2025, 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 guidance above taken directly from Instructions for conducting examinations 2024-2025](#), Section 15, Contingency planning)

- [JCQ Joint Contingency Plan](#)
- [JCQ Preparing for disruption to examinations](#)
- [General Regulations for Approved Centres](#)
- [Guidance notes on alternative site arrangements](#)
- [Guidance notes for transferred candidates](#)
- [ICE - Instructions for conducting examinations](#)
- [A guide to the special consideration process](#)
- [Guidance for centres on cyber security](#) (Effective from November 2023)
- [5 tips to get exam ready and stay cyber safe!](#)
- Information for centres affected by RAAC – the delivery of non-examination assessments and the special consideration process www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/non-examination-assessments/
- Further clarification for centres affected by RAAC, Caledonian Modular or similar building issues – March 2024 www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/non-examination-assessments/

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- [Emergency planning and response: Exam and assessment disruption](#)
- [Dispatch of exam scripts guide: Ensuring the service runs smoothly; Contingency planning](#)

National Cyber Security Centre

- [Cyber Security for Schools](#)
- [Cyber security training for school staff](#)