

CAMS HILL SCHOOL
EXAMINATIONS –
CONTINGENCY PLAN



JCQ Requirement

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Purpose of the Plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the management and administration of the exam process at Cams Hill 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.

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by the Ofqual Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland which provides guidance in the publication 'What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted' and the 'JCQ Joint Contingency Plan - for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland'.

This plan also confirms that Cams Hill School is compliant with the JCQ regulation (section 5.3 General Regulations for Approved Centres 2023-24) in that it 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, or on results day, owing to an unforeseen emergency. The potential impact of a cyber-attack should also be considered.*

Causes of Potential Disruption to the Exam Process

1. Examinations 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, eg 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

Tasks to be undertaken by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) member responsible for exams and the appropriate Senior Administration Assistant.

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

Tasks to be undertaken by SENDCo.

The SLT member responsible for exams is to appoint a qualified assessor to test candidates in place of the SENDCo.

3. 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 Examinations Officer on time resulting in pre-release information not being received;
- Final entry information not provided to the Examinations Officer on time; resulting in:
 - *candidates not being entered for exams/assessments or being entered late;*
 - *late or other penalty fees being charged by awarding bodies;*

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

Centre Actions

- At all times during an academic year, Curriculum Leaders/2nd in charge are responsible for oversight of examination related data tracking and administration with information held centrally.
- Inform the awarding body at the first opportunity to arrange delivery of either a hard copy or electronic copy.
- Entries made to the awarding body on time to meet deadlines and avoid late fees. Amendments can be made at a later date to confirm final entries.
- Awarding body informed and Special Consideration request made to awarding body for extension to the deadline.

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

- The number of invigilators trained to fulfil this role exceeds numbers required for the whole year group examinations including Access Arrangements;
- Cover Supervisors and support staff are trained as invigilators and can be briefed and deployed where necessary.

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

Criteria for Implementation of the Plan

- Examinations 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

SLT to look at the possibility of alternative venue or partial closure of the school to other year groups.

6. Cyber-Attack

Criteria for Implementation of the Plan

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

Centre Actions

- Laptops from our stock on non-network connected machines to be used for pupils requiring a laptop as part of access arrangements in the event of the main school network being compromised.

- Key systems restored from backups (from off-line backup in the event of the backup being compromised).
- Mobile internet access points to be used in the event of an attack involving our ISP or core routing equipment.

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

- Entries made via Examination Board websites;
- Seating plans made **manually** using attendance registers from Examination Boards;
- Results downloaded from Examination Board websites.

8. 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.

Centre Actions

Contingency plans in place to:

- Facilitate alternative methods of learning, alternative venues or both;
- Prioritise candidates who will be taking examinations shortly;
- Advise candidates, where appropriate, to sit examinations in the next available series;
- The centre to communicate with parents, carers and pupils about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this.

9. 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.

Centre Actions

- Liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be taken at an alternative venue – other locations within the school would be allocated for this purpose in the first instance (eg events hall, dining hall, library, spare classrooms). Failing this and in extreme circumstances, please see Section 10 below.
- In agreement with the relevant awarding organisations offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series;
- Apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements;

- 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.

10. 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. The responsibility for deciding whether it is safe for a centre to open lies with the Head of Centre.

Centre Actions

- Open for examinations and examination candidates only, if possible;
- Use alternative buildings on school site, if possible – eg if the Sports Hall is unavailable, use Events Hall and classrooms;
- Use alternative venues in agreement with relevant awarding organisations - share facilities with other centres if possible, for example Portchester School and/or Wallington Hall;
- Apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements;
- Offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series, if possible;
- 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.

11. 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

- Communicate with awarding organisation to arrange alternative method of delivery of hard copies or electronic copies for photocopying;
- The centre to communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery of papers.

12. Disruption to the Transportation of Completed Examination Papers

Criteria for Implementation of the Plan

Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts/assessment evidence.

Centre Actions

- Keep the completed scripts in secure storage and liaise with the awarding organisation and the collection agency to arrange an alternative collection date and time;
- The centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to resolve the issue.

13. Assessment Evidence is not Available to be Marked

Criteria for Implementation of the Plan

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

Centre Actions

Inform awarding organisation at the earliest opportunity and provide any information or evidence requested; *it is the responsibility of the Head of Centre to communicate this immediately to the relevant awarding organisation(s) and subsequently to pupils and their parents or carers.*

14. 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.

Centre Actions

- Make arrangements to access and print examination results from an alternative site, and source an alternative site for collection of results and facilitate post-results services;
- Centres to contact awarding organisations about alternative options.

Causes 8-14

All scenarios, criteria and specific communications have been taken directly from the *JCQ Joint Contingency Plan - for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.*

Appendix 1: Further Guidance to Inform and Implement Contingency Planning

DFE

Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges:
[Cyber Security Standards for schools and colleges](#)

[DfE Cyber Security Guidance – March 2023](#)

(As exam season approaches the Department for Education is reminding schools and colleges to review their cyber security and backup policies).

Ofqual

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.

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

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

General contingency guidance

- [Emergency planning and response](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [Handling strike action in schools](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [School organisation: 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 [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.

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.

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.

3.2 In the event of disruption

- Contact the relevant awarding organisation and follow its instructions.
- Take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether your centre is able to open.
- 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.
- Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned.
- In the event of an evacuation during an examination please refer to the school's [Exams - Emergency Evacuation & Lockdown Procedures](#).
- Communicate with parents, carers and pupils any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.
- Communicate with any external assessors or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable.

3.3 After the exam

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

- Establish and maintain, and at all times comply with, an up-to-date, written contingency plan.
- 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, pupils 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 pupils, 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 pupils. 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 pupils miss an exam or are disadvantaged by the disruption

If some of the pupils 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 A guide to the special consideration process](#)

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

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 Department for Education [issued joint consultation decisions on long-term resilience arrangements](#). As in 2023, Ofqual has published [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.

The Department for Education 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 should speak to the relevant awarding organisations if they are expecting any disruption that might affect the sitting of exams and assessments.

(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 5 October 2023):

<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

1. The qualification regulators, JCQ 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>

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.
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 SENDCo 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, carers and staff should disruption to examinations occur.

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.
5. The awarding bodies will designate 'contingency days' for examinations, summer 2024. 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 2024, 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/carers 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 2023-2024 https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/ICE_23-24_FINAL.pdf, section 15, Contingency Planning)

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

JCQ Preparing for disruption to examinations (Effective from 1 September 2023)
https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Gen_regs_approved_centres_22-23_FINAL.pdf

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: Severe weather; Exam disruption
www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings

Opening and closing local-authority-maintained schools
www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools

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

National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC)

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 an 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](#)