

St Bede's Catholic Voluntary Academy



Exams – Contingency & Resilience Plan

“We commit ourselves to love, respect and serve one another as disciples of Jesus Christ”

Date of Policy Review	January 2025
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Produced on behalf of: AQA, OCR, Pearson and WJEC and content adopted by St Bede's Catholic Voluntary Academy.

Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exam process at St Bede's Catholic Voluntary Academy. By outlining actions/procedures to be followed 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 information contained in the *Joint contingency plan for the examination system in 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"*.

This plan also confirms St Bede's Catholic Voluntary Academy is compliant with the JCQ regulation (section 5.3, General Regulations for Approved Centres 1st September 2024 – 31st August 2025) that the centre has in place a written examination Resilience and 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 staff absence.

(The examination Resilience and Contingency plan/examinations policy should also reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency.)

[JCQ [General regulations for approved centres](#) 3.16 to 3.19]

Possible Causes of Disruption to the Exam Process

1. Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle)
2. SENCo extended absence at key points in the exam cycle
3. Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle
4. Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence
5. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice
6. Failure of IT systems or Cyber-attack
7. Emergency Evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down)
8. Disruption of teaching time – centre closed for an extended period
9. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open
10. Centre unable to open as normal during the exams period
11. Disruption to the distribution of completed examination papers
12. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts
13. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked
14. Centre unable to distribute results as normal
15. Withdrawal of learner or qualifications from NCFE

1. Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the exam cycle not undertaken including:

- *Planning*
 - annual data collection exercise not undertaken to collate information on qualifications and awarding body specifications being delivered
 - annual exams plan not produced identifying essential key tasks, key dates and deadlines
 - sufficient invigilators not recruited and trained
- *Entries*
 - awarding bodies not being informed of early/estimated entries which prompts release of early information required by teaching staff
 - candidates not being entered with awarding bodies for external exams/assessment
 - awarding body entry deadlines missed or late or other penalty fees being incurred
- *Pre-exams*
 - invigilators not trained or updated on changes to instructions for conducting exams
 - exam timetabling, rooming allocation; and invigilation schedules not prepared
 - candidates not briefed on exam timetables and awarding body information for candidates
 - exam/assessment materials and candidates' work not stored under required secure conditions
 - internal assessment marks and samples of candidates' work not submitted to awarding bodies/external moderators
- *Exam time*
 - exams/assessments not taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding bodies
 - required reports/requests not submitted to awarding bodies during exam/assessment periods e.g. very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration
 - candidates' scripts not dispatched as required to awarding bodies
- *Results and post-results*
 - access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates
 - the facilitation of the post-results services

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Business & Assessment Manager will assume the role of examinations officer temporarily.
- Continue to share and raise the profile of all the examination periods and expectations with SLT

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
 - 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 (facilitators) providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained
- *Exam time*
 - access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Close liaison between Examination Officer and SENCo/Learning Support Manager to ensure all are fully aware of expectations, arrangements and future requirements. Headteacher will have specific information shared
- Ensure Lead Invigilator is this is fully aware of future expectations and arrangements for all students

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 exams officer on time; resulting in pre-release information not being received
- Final entry information not provided to the exams officer on time; resulting in:
 - candidates not being entered for exams/assessments or being entered late
 - late or other penalty fees being charged by awarding bodies
- Non-examination assessment tasks not set/issued/taken by candidates as scheduled
- Candidates not being informed of centre assessed marks before marks are submitted to the awarding body and therefore not being able to consider appealing internal assessment decisions and requesting a review of the centre's marking

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Dates shared well in advance with all staff, especially SLs/SLT. Regular reminders sent via email and in Staff Briefings. All information on the school website
- Records kept and shared to ensure monitoring takes place and actions taken as and when necessary

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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Have reserve trained invigilators in place at short notice should they be needed or access to appropriately trained bank staff at agency.

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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Appropriate spaces identified for exam venue planning, with reserves identified. These will always be on site, unless there is an unexpected emergency.
- An alternative examination venue identified. Depending on the situation, the exams will be relocated to one of the following venues - Lincoln Gardens Primary, DN16 2ED or Frederick Gough School DN16 3NG

6. 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

- Cyber-attack of school systems

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Access to other facilities locally – Lincoln Gardens Primary DN16 2ED or Frederick Gough School DN16 3NG
- Remote access via alternative devices
- Exams Officer to make immediate contact with awarding body and JCQ if a suspected breach had happened and follow guidance of awarding body/JCQ.
- Identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding body.
- Where main exam venue(s) unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time) where possible, move to alternative venue, prioritising candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned. Lincoln Gardens Primary DN16 2ED or Frederick Gough School DN16 3NG
- Escalate to trust wide IT support team to support with the recovery during and after a Cyber-attack. On site IT support will be first call of defence, with the assistance of the OLOL team.
- In the event of a cyber attack affecting OLOL CMAT, St Bede's has a reciprocal agreement with Lincoln Gardens Primary DN16 2ED or Frederick Gough School DN16 3NG
- All systems are protected by firewalls and antimalware software and systems. Data is backed up both onsite and offsite. All user access requires specific usernames and passwords, and access to resources remotely is limited.

7. Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down)

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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue.
- Communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issue.
- Local access to Lincoln Gardens Primary DN16 2ED or Frederick Gough School DN16 3NG.
- Communication with awarding bodies for advice
- See Lockdown Policy

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 closed interrupting the of normal teaching and learning

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this.
- Local access to Lincoln Gardens Primary DN16 2ED or Frederick Gough School DN16 3NG.
- Online access to resources via Google Docs/Microsoft Teams for students

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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue.
- Communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issue.
- Arrange for an alternative venue and provide invigilators to supervise
- Arrange for students to be supervised within the academy, without access to IT to prevent contact being made with other centres or students

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 (including centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency)

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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue.
- Communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issue.
- Local access to Lincoln Gardens Primary DN16 2ED or Frederick Gough School DN16 3EG.
- On-line access to resources via Google Docs/Microsoft Teams for students

11. Disruption to 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery of papers

12. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to resolve the issue
- Scripts will be locked in our secure storage space for a maximum of 72hours.

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Head of centre to communicate this immediately to the relevant awarding organisation(s) and subsequently to students and their parents or carers
- Ensure all staff record marks on an ongoing basis and keep examination results in a secure place

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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Contact awarding organisations about alternative options
- Arrange an alternative venue to access/distribute results – Lincoln Gardens Primary DN16 2ED or Frederick Gough School DN16 3EG.

Causes 8-14 – all scenarios, criteria and specific communications have been taken directly from the *Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*.

15. Withdrawal of learner or qualifications from NCFE

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre is unable to delivery planned qualifications due to withdrawal from NCFE
- Candidate is unable to undertake qualification with NCFE, due to significant absence or other mitigating circumstances.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Contact awarding organisations about alternative options and associated delivery times.
- Arrange an alternative qualification if appropriate for the cohort of learners or individual learner. In the instance of group delivery, advice would be sought from OLOL and North Lincolnshire Consortium.

Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning

Ofqual

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

1. Contingency planning

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

2. Disruption to assessments or exams

In the absence of any instruction from the relevant awarding organisation, the school or college should assume that any exam or timetabled assessment should take place if it is possible for it to do so. This may mean having to locate alternative premises.

If the exam or assessment cannot take place, or if a student misses an exam or loses their assessment due to an emergency or other event outside the control of the school or college, you should discuss alternative arrangements with your awarding organisation.

2.1 The school or college should consider the following steps:

Exam planning

1. Review your contingency plan well in advance of each exam series.
2. Ensure that copies of question papers are received and stored under secure conditions.

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 the school or college is able to open.
3. Identify whether the exam can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation.
4. Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exams when planned.
5. Communicate with parents, carers and students regarding any changes to the exam timetable.
6. Advise students, where appropriate, to sit exams in the next available series.

After the exam

1. Consider whether students may be eligible for special consideration.
2. Ensure that scripts are stored under secure conditions.
3. 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.

2.2 The awarding organisation should take the following steps:

Exam planning

1. Establish, maintain and at all times comply with an up to date written contingency plan.
2. Ensure that the arrangements that are in place with schools and colleges enable them to deliver and award qualifications in accordance with its conditions of recognition.

In the event of disruption

1. Take all reasonable steps to mitigate any negative effect, in relation to its qualifications, arising from any disruption.
2. Provide effective guidance to any of its centres responsible for delivering qualifications on its behalf.
3. Ensure that where an assessment is required to be completed under specified conditions, students 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 a negative effect on students, standards or public confidence.

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.

2.3 When a student misses an exam or is disadvantaged by the disruption

If you feel that the performance of all or some of your students has been negatively affected by the disruption you should ask your awarding organisation about applying for special consideration. The decision about what special consideration is, or is not appropriate, is for awarding organisations to make. Their decisions might be different, for different qualifications and for different subjects. However, we encourage awarding organisations to adopt a consistent approach, including between learners, schools or colleges, and awarding organisations, when dealing with a number of similar cases.

[Ofqual guidance extract 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, sections 1 and 2

<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

The qualifications 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.

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.

Centres should prepare plans for any disruption to examinations as part of their general emergency planning. It is important to ensure that relevant centre staff are familiar with the plan. Consideration should be given as to how these arrangements will be communicated to candidates, parents and staff should disruption to examinations occur.

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.

Further information may be found at: <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 guidance taken directly from JCQ *Instructions for conducting examinations* <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>, page iv]

General regulations for approved centres

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

Guidance on alternative site arrangements

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

Guidance on transferred candidate arrangements

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/entries>

Instructions for conducting examinations

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>

A guide to the special consideration process

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance>

GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response; Severe weather; Exam disruption

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings>

Teaching time lost due to severe weather conditions

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-time-lost-due-to-severe-weather-conditions>

Dispatch of exam scripts: yellow label service

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>

Statutory guidance on school closures

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools>

Taken directly from JCQ *Instructions for conducting examinations* <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>, page iii]