

Contingency Plan 2025/26

Plan reviewed by: Mrs Natasha Hodes and Head of Centre

Centre Name	The Purcell School
Centre Number	17610
Date plan first created	April 2019
Current plan approved by	SLT
Date of review	November 2025
Date of next review	November 2026

Key Staff Involved in Exam Contingency Planning

Role	Name(s)
Head of Centre	Mr Paul Bambrough
Senior Leaders	Mr Thomas Burns Mr Michael Long (Contingency DDEO) Mr Ziggi Szafranski Mr Adam Wroblewski
Exams Officer	Mrs Natasha Hodes
Head of Learning Support	Mrs Sally-Ann Whitty
IT Network Manager	Mr Simon Kingsbury

This plan is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that exam contingency planning at The Purcell School is managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations.

Purpose of the Plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the examination/assessment process at The Purcell 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 publication *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** (Effective from 1 September 2024).

This plan also confirms The Purcell School's 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:

- A written contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination/assessment administration and delivery.

Contingency Arrangements

In accordance with the regulations (GR 3.17-19), The Purcell 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 Purcell 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.

The Purcell School **must** ensure where 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 The Purcell 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 or senior leader may be absent at a critical stage in the examination cycle, main duties and responsibilities will be escalated in accordance with the centre's escalation process.

Possible Causes of Disruption to the Exam Process

1. EXAMS OFFICER 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

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
- 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, for example very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration
- Candidates' scripts not dispatched as required for marking to awarding bodies

Results/Post-results

- Access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates
- The facilitation of post-results services

Other criteria

- Gathering of information for University Admissions Tests in time for entry deadline

Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption Listed Above

The centre will:

- Collate and submit estimated entries for summer examinations
- DD (Designated Deputy EO) to request password and access to exam board web-based entry system
- Process any Admission Tests for University entry by mid-October deadline
- DD to register with Cambridge Assessment Admissions testing
- Collate entries (if any) for November examinations following consultation with Heads of Department
- If required, set up SIMS for November series and download base data from examination boards to make November entries
- DD to use SIMS manual in EO's Office for guidance. May seek assistance from local EO's at Queens' School or Watford Grammar School
- Liaise with Head of Learning Support regarding Access Arrangements, print and distribute candidate timetables, assign exam rooms, arrange with Estates Department for set up of rooms, produce seating plans and door notices, secure exam papers on arrival. Arrange invigilation
- DD to liaise with Head of Learning Support regarding Access Arrangements and with Bursar regarding room set up
- On exam day pack boxes for each session and each room with appropriate equipment, posters, etc. Confirm with the invigilator that they have correct exam scripts for their candidates, book courier collection
- DD will liaise with the School Office regarding courier collection.

Spring Term

- Download results for November season, distribute results to students, make **Review of Results (ROR)** applications for November exams. DD will use SIMS results day manual in EO's office for guidance
- Check new students' files for UCI number and allocate if there is not one available
- Liaise with Heads of Departments to collate summer exam entries
- Set up new season on SIMS
- Download basedata
- Make entries for summer exams
- Liaise with Head of Learning Support regarding Access Arrangements
- Distribute timetables to candidates
- Assign exam rooms

- Produce seating plans, invigilator registers, etc
- Produce invigilator presentation and train new invigilators
- Host update training session for invigilators.

Summer Term

- Administer exams
- Log and secure exam papers and associated confidential material on arrival
- On exam days set up room with posters, clocks, registers, candidate cards on desks, exam equipment box, etc
- Confirm with an invigilator that the correct exam paper is removed from secure store
- Distribute exam papers to invigilators/exam rooms
- Complete exam board register and invigilator report
- Act as roving invigilator and be contactable by other invigilators at all times for toilet runs, cases of illness/exam disturbance, etc - arrange Parcelforce collections
- Escort JCQ/CIE on inspections and attend to any queries/requests that they have
- DD to carry out above duties
- Distribute CIE login to candidates for access of results from exam board on results day(s)
- Liaise with exam boards regarding absence/special consideration/factors affecting candidates' performance.

Summer Break

- Download results into SIMS on release days (3 days – CIE IGCSE and A level, JCQ A level and CIE Pre-U, JCQ GCSE)
- Distribute results to candidates
- Distribute results for each subject to relevant Heads of Department where requested
- Create spreadsheet of results from SIMS for SLT/statistical use
- Submit grades to ISC/CEM and DfE
- Make Review of Results (ROR) applications where requested
- DD will find instructions for SIMS in manual in the EO's Office. Grades information can also be gained from individual exam board websites.

Summary of Responsibilities of the Examinations Officer in preparation for Public Exams

- To ensure the set-up of exam venue(s) and to ensure that the exam materials, i.e. name cards, notices, clocks, etc are in place. To ensure that invigilation duty is in place
- To ensure, with an invigilator, that the correct packets of exam papers have been removed from the safe and to split the packets, where necessary, for smaller rooms in the presence of an invigilator
- To ensure that all the candidates have arrived for an exam and chase up, via school office, any candidates who are not present. To supervise an orderly and timely

start to the exams held in the main venue (usually the CP Hall) or to delegate this to invigilators where necessary

- To act as 'roving invigilator'.

Summary of the Examination Officer's Responsibilities at the end of Public Exams

- To ensure that the exam has finished at the correct time and in an orderly fashion and to arrange a secure collection of exam scripts and their despatch
- To distribute spare copies of scripts to relevant Heads of Department after the last candidate in the centre has finished the exam (or 24 hours after the key time in the case of CIE).

In the event that the Exams Officer is unable to attend work on a day when a public exam is scheduled the duties will fall to DD EO or someone appointed by the HOC. Keys to gain entry to the Exams Office will be held in the School Office in a secure location (locked key cabinet).

DD will use these keys to gain admission to the Exams Office and to the key cabinet in the secure room, in which are the keys to the secure cabinet housing the exam scripts and registers.

The Exams Office keys will be returned to the secure location in the School Office at the earliest possible opportunity following their use. In the event of the Exams Officer being unable to attend work, or being delayed for work they will:

- In the case of illness or family/domestic emergency: send an email to HOC or DD
- In the case of being delayed in traffic: phone HOC or DD and state their expected time of arrival.

Emergency Protocols for accommodation of Public Exams

If the main building and/or CP Hall are out of action, public examinations can be scheduled in other locations on the site:

- CP Hall exams can be scheduled in the NMC Recital Room,
- Liszt Room/ICT Room/academic corridor classroom exams can be scheduled for NMC Recital Room or NMC classroom

Exam desks and chairs will be moved as needed by the Estates Department. Music practice and music teaching in the immediate vicinity of the replacement venue will need to be relocated/cancelled for the duration of the exam.

2. HEAD OF LEARNING SUPPORT 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 or 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 Listed Above

The centre will:

- Appoint a qualified assessor to test candidates in the absence of the Head of Learning Support
- Arrange approval for access arrangements from exam boards
- Arrange student support during 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 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 awarding body submission deadlines

Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption Listed Above

The centre will:

Head of Centre (or Vice-Principal in HoC absence) will:

- Appoint a qualified substitute teacher to cover extended absence of a teacher during the examination or NEA cycle
- Arrange for HoD to oversee the substitute teacher
- Arrange student and teacher support during exams

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 Listed Above

The centre will:

- Will use internal staff members, both Support staff and Teaching staff, who will have attended invigilator training as part of staff training annually, both Support staff and Teaching staff

5. EXAM ROOMS - LACK OF APPROPRIATE ROOMS OR MAIN VENUE(S) UNAVAILABLE AT SHORT NOTICE

Criteria for Implementation of the Plan

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

Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption Listed Above

The centre will:

- (Where main exam venue(s) unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time) where possible, make use of other available rooms within the centre, prioritising candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- 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

Alternative Venue Details

In the event that The Purcell School site is unavailable for public exams, the Principal will make immediate contact with the following institutions to arrange alternative accommodation:

- **Queens' School**, Aldenham Road, Bushey, WD23 2TY
- **Bushey Sports Club** (formerly The Metropolitan Police Sports Club), Aldenham Road, Bushey, WD23 2TR

If temporary accommodation is not available at these institutions, the Principal shall approach:

- **Aldenham School**, Elstree, Hertfordshire, WD6 3AJ
- **Edge Grove School**, Aldenham Village, Watford, WD25 8BL

Students can make their own way to Queens School and The (Metropolitan Police) Bushey Sports Club, but will be given precise instructions by a duty member of staff designated by HoC.

If Aldenham School or Edge Grove School are to be used for public exams minibus/taxi transport will be arranged for students via the School Office, or out of hours by HoC.

The transfer of secure materials to and from the temporary venue will be the responsibility of the Exams Officer.

Communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or venue.

Communication Details

When temporary accommodation outside of the school campus is to be used for public exams, students will be informed of the change of venue via boarding house staff and tutors. Day students will be informed of the change of venue via e-mail from the Exams Officer and in person at Reception by a member of the school office staff.

- Ensure the secure transportation of question papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue
- (After the exam) consider whether any candidate's ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

6. CYBER SECURITY

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of delivery please refer to the school's H8 Crisis Management Plan Policy (Cyber Security Action Plan - page 18).

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

The Purcell School will implement its Crisis Management Policy and will include informing all awarding bodies and JCQ of the cyber attack to lock down all our systems to prevent exams information being leaked. This will include the required arrangements for cyber security.

(GR 3.21) Ensure there are procedures in place to maintain the security of user accounts by:

- a) Providing training for authorised staff on the importance of creating strong unique passwords and keeping all account details secret
- b) Providing training for staff on awareness of all types of social engineering/phishing attempts
- c) Enabling additional security settings wherever possible
- 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' multi-factor authentication (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

- MIS/IT system failure at final entry deadline
- MIS/IT system failure during exams preparation
- MIS/IT system failure at results release time
- IT systems corruption affecting candidates' work

Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption Listed Above

The centre will:

- Speak to and get advice from the awarding bodies regarding any failure of IT at time of deadline for entries
- Confirm with the IT Manager when to expect a full IT system to be running and inform all students and awarding bodies of any delays that the IT failure has caused

- Speak to and get advice from the awarding bodies regarding any failure of IT at time of results release, inform candidates of any delays to results release and how we plan to get results to them

(GR 3.19) The Purcell School will ensure that candidates' work is backed-up.

- Windows file(s) saved to our local internal network areas (such as T: drive and N: drives etc) are included in our normal network backup processes nightly to a separate onsite backup server, and then replicated to an offsite secure cloud repository.
- For file(s) created/saved in Google Workspace (such as Google Drive), we subscribe to a 3rd-party cloud-to-cloud backup/replication service - which regularly and dynamically mirrors copies of our Google data for safekeeping and recovery.
- Windows machines are locked down with policy and have network redirects in place to discourage you from saving anywhere that's not safe.
- The iPads in Art and the Apple Macs in Music Tech: it is possible to save files/projects to a local device drive if you choose to. Due to the size of projects and files that these departments work with, 'working locally' is usually recommended.
- Where permitted, Music Tech students are routinely reminded to replicate work to a safe internal network or Google Drive space at regular intervals, or when any significant progress is made, to protect against data loss should a local device fail.
- The Art Department knows when working with iPads and other devices, such as digital cameras, they must self-manage (and backup to alternative secure locations) any files that are created outside of our Google Workspace and/or internal network.

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 to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption Listed Above

The centre will:

- Refer to and invoke its (exams) emergency evacuation policy/procedure in line with JCQ's 'Centre emergency evacuation procedure' (or its (exams) lockdown policy)
- Contact the relevant awarding body as soon as possible and follow its instructions
- Where accommodation is limited, prioritise candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- (After the exam) consider whether any candidate's ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration.

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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- Recognise it remains the responsibility of the centre to prepare students, as usual, for examinations
- Facilitate alternative methods of learning
- Communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) information relating to alternative methods of learning.

Communication Details

To be confirmed:

- Take advice offered by the awarding body regarding alternative arrangements for conducting examinations that may be available
- Take advice offered by the awarding body on the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations
- Advise candidates, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date.

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 because of a crisis.

Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption Listed Above

The centre will:

- Take advice offered by the awarding body on the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations
- Discuss alternative arrangements with the awarding body if a candidate misses an exam or loses their assessment due to an emergency, or other event, outside of the candidate's control
- Identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding body, ensuring the secure transportation of questions papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue
- Consider moving the starting time of the examination for all candidates

- Communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.

Communication Details

- Students will be informed via boarding house staff and tutors. Day students will be informed via email from the Exams Officer and in person at Reception by a member of the school office staff. All parents/carers will be informed by email by the Exams Officer
- Consider whether any candidates' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration.

11. CENTRE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO OPEN FOR EXAMINATIONS (including in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency)

Criteria for Implementation of the Plan

- Centre unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations

Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption Listed Above

The centre will:

- Decide on whether it is safe for a centre to open. The decision lies with the Head of Centre who is responsible for taking advice or following instructions from relevant local or national agencies
- Contact the relevant awarding body as soon as possible and follow its instructions
- Discuss alternative arrangements with the awarding body if the exam or assessment cannot take place
- Alternative venue details as mentioned in section 5 of this guidance
- Follow guidance provided by the awarding body on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances
- Where accommodation is limited, prioritise candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- Communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue

Communication Details

- Students will be informed via boarding house staff and tutors. Day students will be informed via email from the Exams Officer and in person at Reception by a member of the school office staff. All parents/carers will be informed by email by the Exams Officer
- Consider whether any candidates' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration.

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 to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption Listed Above

The centre will:

- Liaise with awarding bodies regarding the provision of electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network and will ensure when copies are received/made these are stored under secure conditions
- Follow guidance provided by the awarding body on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances
- Understand that, as a last resort, and in close collaboration with centres and regulators, awarding organisations will consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date
- Communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.

13. DELAY IN COLLECTION ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMPLETED EXAMINATION SCRIPTS

Criteria for Implementation of the Plan

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

Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption Listed Above

The centre will:

- Where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding bodies arrange collections, seek advice from awarding bodies and will not make its own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding body
- For any examinations where the centre makes its own arrangements for transportation, investigate alternative dispatch options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ's Instructions for Conducting Examinations
- Ensure the secure storage of completed examination scripts 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 (updated 2020/21)
- Completed examination scripts/assessment evidence does not reach awarding organisations.

Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption Listed Above

The centre will:

- Liaise with the awarding body to determine if candidate marks for affected assessments may be able to be generated based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding body
- Where marks cannot be generated by awarding body, inform candidates they may need to retake the affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series

15. CENTRE UNABLE TO DISTRIBUTE RESULTS AS NORMAL (including in the event of the centre being unavailable on results day owing to an unforeseen emergency) or facilitate post-results services

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 Listed Above

The centre will:

- Make arrangements to access its results at an alternative venue/share facilities with another centre if this is possible, in agreement with the relevant awarding body
- Make arrangements to coordinate access to post-results services from an alternative venue

Alternative venue details:

- In the event that The Purcell School site is unavailable for public exams, the Principal will make immediate contact with the following institutions to arrange alternative accommodation:
 - o **Queens' School**, Aldenham Road, Bushey, WD23 2TY
 - o **Bushey Sports Club** (formerly Metropolitan Police Sports Club), Aldenham Road, Bushey, WD23 2TR
- If temporary accommodation is not available at these institutions, the Principal shall approach:
 - o **Aldenham School**, Elstree, Hertfordshire, WD6 3AJ o **Edge Grove School**, Aldenham Village, Watford, WD25 8BL
- Make arrangements to make post results requests at an alternative location
- Contact the relevant awarding body if electronic post results requests are not possible
- Inform candidates of any alternative arrangements in place for the distribution of results and the facilitation of post-results services.

Communication Details

- When temporary accommodation outside of the school campus is to be used for public exams, students will be informed of the change of venue via boarding house staff and tutors

- Day students will be informed of the change of venue via e-mail from the Exams Officer and in person at Reception by a member of the school office staff.

Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

DfE

Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges

[Cyber Security Standards for schools and colleges](#)

[Cyber crime and cyber security: a guide for education providers](#)

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

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

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 [DfE 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](#) 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 as well as 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
- [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 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

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 body must be informed as soon as possible. Awarding bodies will be able to offer advice regarding the alternative arrangements for conducting examinations that may be available and the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations.

15.5 The awarding bodies will designate 'contingency sessions' 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>

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** 2025/26
<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>, section 15,
Contingency planning)

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

JCQ Preparing for disruption to examinations

www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/

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

Guidance for centres on cyber security (Effective from November 2023)

www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/

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

[Further clarification for centres affected by RAAC, Caledonian Modular or similar building issues – March 2024](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/non-examination-assessments/) www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/non-examination-assessments/

GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response: Exam and assessment disruption

www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings

Dispatch of exam scripts guide: Ensuring the service runs smoothly; Contingency planning

www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service

National Cyber Security Centre

Cyber Security for Schools <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/education-skills/cyber-security-schools>

Cyber security training for school staff

<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/information/cyber-security-training-schools>