



Castle Newnham School

TRADITIONAL VALUES, BRIGHT FUTURES, ONE JOURNEY

Examinations Contingency Plan

AUTHOR:	M. Herridge
DATE APPROVED:	September 2026
APPROVED BY:	Local Governing Board
NEXT REVIEW DATE:	September 2027



Contents

Purpose of the plan

Causes of potential disruption to the exam process

- A. Exams Officer extended absence at key points during the exam cycle
- B. SENCO extended absence at key points in the exam cycle
- C. Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle
- D. Invigilators – lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence
- E. Exam rooms – lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice
- F. Failure of IT systems – including any due to potential Cyber Attack
- G. Disruption of teaching time – centre closed for an extended period
- H. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open
- I. Centre unable to open as normal during the exams period
- J. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers
- K. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts
- L. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked
- M. Centre unable to distribute results as normal

Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning

- Ofqual
- JCQ
- GOV.UK



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 Castle Newnham School. 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.

At all times, the Examinations Officer and the Senior Leadership Team will liaise with the relevant Awarding Body to ensure any contingency plans meet with its requirements and that JCQ regulations are adhered to where possible.

This plan will be reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team/Exams Officer/Governors following public examinations.

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.

CAUSES OF POTENTIAL DISRUPTION TO THE EXAM PROCESS

A. Exams Officer extended absence at key points during the exam cycle

E.g. Exams Officer suffers sudden or long term illness.

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the exam cycle which risk not being undertaken include:

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
- Insufficient invigilators 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/assessments
- 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 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:

- Exam admin to be supported by the lead invigilator, data administrator and deputy headteacher.
- Exams officer produces Exams Handbook (electronic) to contain all relevant information regarding exams in the centre.
- Storage of passwords/relevant contact details of Awarding bodies to be available to AP
- Generic timeline to be set up to offer approximate structure of tasks.
- Seek help from Exams Officers in reciprocal schools.

B. SENDCO extended absence at key points in the exam cycle

E.g. SENDCO suffers sudden/long-term illness

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the exam cycle which risk not being undertaken include:

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:

- SENDCO/Exam Officer to undertake Access Arrangements admin together
- Access Arrangements to be kept updated and electronically
- SEND Administrator and BEST Director of SEND to support

C. Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle

E.g. Due to sudden/long-term illness

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

Key tasks which risk not being undertaken include:

- Early/estimated entry information not provided to the Exams Officer on time; resulting in pre-release information not being received
- Final entry information not provided to the Exams Officer on time resulting in: candidates not being entered for exams/assessments or being entered late; late or other penalty fees being charged by awarding bodies
- Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet submission deadlines

**Centre Actions:**

- Heads of Department/SLT to organise information for exam entries
- Line management systems are in place and support exam cycle

D. Invigilators – lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence

E.g. Due to illness

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 the exam

Centre Actions:

- Ensure all LSA's are exam trained
- Build up a pool of external invigilators

E. Exam rooms – lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice

E.g. Due to flooding/fire

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:

- Keep list of rooms as possible venues (to include Primary provision).
- Investigate and use alternative provision –reciprocal schools (e.g. North site primary; South site, Goldington Academy)

F. Failure of IT systems

E.g. Due to power failure/computer fail/cyber attack

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 at any point

Centre Actions:

- Ensure IT have personnel available and back-up systems in place
- Relocate to South site
- Ensure laptop batteries are fit for purpose and kept on charge during exam periods
- Have mobile phones for use during exam periods
- Ensure paper copies of electronic exams are available
- SLT will report to NCSC (https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/education-skills/cyber-security-schools#section_5) and Action Fraud (accessed from NCSC website), (if a data breach is included the school will also report to the ICO).



- Exams Office, supported by SLT will liaise with Awarding Bodies directly.

G. Disruption of teaching time – centre closed for an extended period

E.g. Due to fire/flooding

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:

- Liaise with LA/Awarding bodies/JCQ
- Prioritise candidates taking exams shortly
- Advise candidates, where appropriate, to sit exams at next available series
- Have alternative provision in place (use South site and possible part time use of building if not too badly damaged)
- Use existing online systems to enable pupils to access work

H. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open

E.g. Due to extensive sickness bug

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

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

Centre Actions:

- Liaise with Awarding bodies/JCQ – special consideration from Awarding bodies, possibly offer candidates next available exam series
- Liaise with candidates and parents/carers via text messaging/e-mail systems

I. Centre unable to open as normal during the exams period

E.g. Due to fire

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

- Centre unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations

Centre Actions:

- Liaise with Awarding bodies/JCQ – if possible open for exam candidates only/special consideration/if appropriate offer candidates next available exam series
- Use South site and alternative schools
- Liaise with candidates and parents/carers via text messaging/e-mail systems

J. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

E.g. Courier delivers wrong papers to exam centre

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

- Disruption to the distribution of examinations papers to the centre in advance of examinations

Centre Actions:



- Liaise with Awarding bodies – papers sent via alternative couriers/papers e-mailed to centre via secure network. (Security to be kept as with normal exam paper delivery)

K. Disruption to the transportation of completed examinations scripts

E.g. Courier service breaks down

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examinations scripts

Centre Actions:

- Liaise with Awarding bodies – keep papers secure until Awarding bodies arrange alternative collection arrangements/take papers to Parcelforce depot (MK)

L. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

E.g. Fire destroys completed exam scripts

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:

- Liaise with Awarding bodies – generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidates' achievement, as defined by Awarding organisations in conjunction with the regulators/candidates retake the affected assessment at a subsequent assessment window if possible

M. Centre is unable to distribute results as normal

E.g. Awarding body process failure delays preparation and issuing of results or centre unable to open computer file.

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:

- Take advice from affected Awarding bodies and JCQ/arrange for results to be accessed at an alternative site (e.g. South site)
- Liaise with candidates and parents/carers via text messaging/e-mail systems

In all scenarios, the school will liaise with the Awarding bodies and the JCQ and appropriate communication will be made with all concerned parties i.e. Staff/candidates and parent/carers.



Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning

Ofqual

Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/joint-contingency-plan-in-the-event-of-widespread-disruption-to-the-examination-system-in-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

JCQ

General regulations

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

Guidance on alternative site arrangements

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

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

Emergencies and severe weather: schools and early years settings

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

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/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-guide>