

# Maplewell Hall School



## Exam Contingency Plan Policy

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<b>Governing Body Committee</b>	<b>Curriculum Committee</b>
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## Contents

Purpose of the plan .....	3
Causes of potential disruption to the exam process.....	3
1. Exam Officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle).....	3
2. SENCo/Exams Officer extended absence at key points in the exam cycle.....	4
3. Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle .....	4
4. Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence .....	5
5. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice.....	5
6. Failure of IT systems.....	5
7. Disruption of teaching time – centre closed for an extended period.....	6
8. Students unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open .....	6
9. Centre unable to open as normal during the exams period .....	6
10. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers.....	6
11. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts .....	7
12. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked.....	7
13. Centre unable to distribute results as normal.....	7
Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning .....	7
Ofqual .....	7
JCQ .....	10
GOV.UK.....	11
National Counter Terrorism Security Office .....	11

## 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 Maplewell Hall 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 scenarios contained in the Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

This plan complies with JCQ general regulations (section 5) in that:

The centre agrees to “have in place a written examination contingency plan/examinations policy which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to have a robust contingency plan in place, minimising risk to examination administration, should the examinations officer be absent at a crucial stage of the examination cycle;”

## Causes of potential disruption to the exam process

### 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
  - students 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
  - students not briefed on exam timetables and awarding body information for students - exam/assessment materials and students' work not stored under required secure conditions
  - internal assessment marks and samples of students' 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
- students' scripts not dispatched as required to awarding bodies,
- Results and Post Results
  - access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to students
  - the facilitation of the post-results services

**Centre actions:**

- SLT to nominate a “deputy” to cover a role/task
- Source alternative venues/facilities.

**2. SENCo/Exams Officer 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
  - students 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 students not allocated and trained
- Exam time
  - access arrangement student support not arranged for exam rooms

**Centre actions:**

- SLT to nominate a “deputy” to cover a role/task.

**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:
  - Students not being entered for exams/assessments or being entered late
  - Late or other penalty fees being charged by awarding bodies

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

**Centre actions:**

- SLT to nominate a “deputy” to cover a role/task.

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

**Centre actions:**

- SLT to nominate a “deputy” to cover a role/task.

**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 unexpected incident at exam time

**Centre actions:**

- Source alternative venues/facilities.

**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

**Centre actions:**

- SIMS is backed up weekly and all data is held on coded memory stick. Access to this information will be provided to the Exams Officer.

## **7. Disruption of teaching time – centre closed for an extended period**

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre closed or students 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:**

- Centre to communicate with parents, carers and students about the disruption to teaching time and provide appropriate work via the school intranet

## **8. Students unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open**

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

### **Centre actions:**

- Centre will communicate with relevant awarding organisation to make them aware of the issue
- Centre will then communicate solutions to parents/carers and student.

## **9. 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

### **Centre actions:**

- Centre to inform awarding organisation of examinations to be affected
- Look where possible to provide alternative provision eg local middle schools

## **10. 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. The centre to communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery of papers.

### **Centre actions:**

- Centre to discuss alternative delivery of papers to the centre.

## 11. 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:**

- Centre will communicate and organise alternative arrangements for delivery of scripts.

## 12. 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:**

- Immediate communication to be made with relevant awarding body
- Students, parents and carers to be informed by letter.

## 13. 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 students, or to facilitate post results services Centres to contact awarding organisations about alternative options.

### **Centre actions:**

- Centres to contact awarding bodies and discuss alternative means of distribution.

## 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 and make sure staff are aware of these plans.

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

#### 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

### **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.

#### 3.2 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 parents, carers and students any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.
7. Communicate with any external assessors or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable.

#### 3.3 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 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.



## 4. Steps the awarding organisation should take

### 4.1 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.

### 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, students 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 students, 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 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.

## 5. 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.

See also:

- [JCQ's guidance on special considerations](#)

## 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

In the event of widespread sustained national disruption, the 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 exam timetables.

*(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 (updated 02 March 2020) <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

15.1 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/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-if-exams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted>

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 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.

15.4 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.

15.5 The awarding bodies will designate a 'contingency day' for examinations, summer 2021. 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 a 'contingency day' 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 2021, 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 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 are aware of this contingency arrangement so that they may take it into account when making their plans for the summer. However, the awarding bodies will not insist upon candidates being available throughout the entire timetable period as a matter of course.

(JCQ guidance above taken directly from Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2020-2021

<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](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents)

General Regulations for Approved Centres [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations)

Guidance notes on alternative site arrangements [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms)

Guidance notes for transferred candidates [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms)

Instructions for Conducting Examinations [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations](http://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](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

[www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings](http://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](http://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 Counter Terrorism Security Office**

Procedures for handling bomb threats [www.gov.uk/government/publications/bomb-threats-guidance/procedures-for-handling-bomb-threats](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bomb-threats-guidance/procedures-for-handling-bomb-threats)