



RIDGEWOOD  
HIGH SCHOOL

# Exams Contingency Plan

## 2023 - 2024

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Version	Date	Amendments
V3	12/01/24	<b>Introduction &amp; Aims</b> - inclusion of National Centre Number Register and other information requirements
V3	12/01/24	<b>Introduction &amp; Aims</b> - inclusion re Head of centre absence at critical stage of exam cycle
V3	12/01/24	<b>Further guidance to inform procedures</b> Reference publications and links updated where necessary

## Introduction & Aims

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

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by the Ofqual **Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland**, which provides guidance in the publication *What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams and 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 2023).

This plan also confirms Ridgewood High School's compliance with the JCQ publication **General Regulations for Approved Centres** (section 5.3), that the centre has in place a written contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination administration.

This Contingency Plan 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 plan reinforces procedures in the event that Ridgewood High School is unavailable for examinations or on results day owing to an unforeseen emergency, and the action to be taken to mitigate impact upon all aspects of delivery of examinations in the event of a cyber-attack at any point during the examination cycle.

### National Centre Number Register and other information requirements

The head of centre will also ensure that Ridgewood High School, as a contingency to enable the prompt handling of urgent issues only, responds to the awarding bodies' request for information regarding the contact details of a senior member of staff (which might include a personal mobile number and/or email address). This will ensure that any urgent matters which might adversely affect candidates which arise outside of term time, and which potentially put qualification awards at risk, can be addressed by awarding bodies with the support of that member of staff. The head of centre will ensure that this member of staff has the necessary authority to mobilise resources to provide this support, which might include resolving issues within the centre itself.

### Head of centre absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle

Where the head of centre may absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle, main duties and responsibilities will be escalated in accordance with the centre's written escalation process.

# Possible causes of potential disruption to the exam process

## 1. Exam Officer 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 exam cycle not undertaken including:

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

### Centre actions to mitigate the impact of disruption:

- Exam Officer to liaise with Deputy Head (Standards) over entries.

- Exam Officer, Deputy Head (Standards), Exams Office Assistant/Senior Invigilator to liaise over pre-exam administration and invigilator training.
- Exam Office Assistant/Deputy Head (Standards) to liaise with Exam Officer regarding exam time issues and results. NB – consideration to be made to any conflict of interest declarations made by Exam Office staff/Head of Centre/Deputy Head and ICT Support – if a conflict of interest is identified NO unaccompanied access allowed to secure storage and materials.

## 2. SENCo 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 arrangements requirements.
  - Evidence of need and evidence to support normal way of working not collated.
  - Centre fails to recognise its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010
- **Pre-exams**
  - Approval for access arrangements not applied 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 disruption:

- SENCO deputy to liaise with Exams Officer over SENCO absence; Exams Officer to liaise with awarding body for guidance where required; application for Special Consideration to be made to awarding body where appropriate (see JCQ document *A guide to the special consideration process*)

## 3. Teaching staff 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.
  - Late or other penalty fees being charged by awarding bodies.
- Non-examination assessment tasks not set/issued/taken by candidates as scheduled.
- Candidates not 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 request 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 disruption:**

- Deputy Head and Exams Officer to liaise with Faculty Leaders and remaining teaching staff.
- Exams Officer to contact Awarding Bodies for guidance where required.

**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 the exam.

**Centre actions to mitigate the impact of disruption:**

- Recruitment and training is done well in advance.
- Exams Officer, Exams Office Assistant and Senior Invigilator to cover absences or shortages, although RHS policy is not to work to the minimum ratio requirements. Additional support to be provided by appropriately trained TAs/staff members where possible.
- Exams Officer to arrange supply invigilators to cover where needed (supply invigilators to be trained in centre-specific requirements)

**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 disruption:**

- Unused classrooms to be utilised for examination purposes, with appropriate layout and signage in order to comply with JCQ ICE regulations.

- Exams Officer to contact Awarding Bodies to see whether assessment may be sat at an alternative site (ideally at another school within Stour Vale Academy Trust), prioritising candidates whose progression would be severely delayed if assessment not taken when planned.
- Changes to exam venue or assessment timetable to be communicated to candidates and parent/carers.
- Exams Officer to ensure secure transfer of assessment materials to the alternative site.
- Exams Officer to apply for Special Consideration where appropriate.

## 6. Failure of IT systems (including 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/ransomware infection resulting in data loss.
- Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of delivery.

### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of disruption:**

- Exams Officer and IT Manager to liaise with Examination Boards, other schools within the MAT and with RM Education as to appropriate action.
- Computer systems have ransomware and malware protection, which are regularly reviewed and updated.
- User and server data is backed up twice daily to a tape safe, and a copy of the server is taken every night.
- Backups are held **offline**.
- Business continuity and disaster recovery plans are in place; and tested processes ensure that services can be restored and data recovered from the offline back-ups if necessary.

## 7. Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lockdown)

### **Criteria for implementation of the plan**

- Whole centre evacuation (or lock down) 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**

- Where evacuation required, school's Emergency Evacuation Procedures (Exams) to be implemented; in the event of centre lockdown the school's Lockdown Procedure (Exams) to be implemented.
- Exams Officer to contact Awarding Bodies for instructions.
- Exams Officer to make applications for Special Consideration where appropriate.

## 8. 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 disruption:**

- Headteacher, Governors, SLT to take necessary action to implement delivery of lessons remotely using pre-recorded and live lessons; ICT provision in place to ensure consistent teaching and delivery of course content to students via online platforms (eg Microsoft Teams).
- Information relating to alternative methods of learning to be communicated to candidates and parents/carers.
- For modular courses, eg Cambridge Nationals/ BTEC, Faculty Leaders/SLT to liaise with teaching staff re delivery of modules for assessment in an alternative series (awarding bodies to provide guidance re delivery of units for assessment where appropriate). Exams Officer to liaise with awarding bodies as required.
- Exams Officer to contact Awarding Bodies for advice re any alternative arrangements that may be available and options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations; advice to be communicated to candidates and parents/carers.

## 9. Centre may be unable to open as normal during the exam period (including in the event of the Centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency)

### **Criteria for implantation of the plan**

- Centre unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations.

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 disruption:**

- Head of Centre to take advice/follow instructions from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether centre is able to open.
- Head of Centre to liaise with other schools within the MAT to facilitate examinations wherever possible.
- Headteacher and Exams Officer to explore alternative local venues (ideally other school sites within the MAT, or local primary schools).



- Exams officer to implement alternative arrangements for the conducting of examinations and to notify the JCQ inspection service of an alternative site arrangement by submitting the JCQ Alternative Site form online, using the Centre Admin Portal

## 10. Candidates may not be able to take examinations - centre remains open

### **Criteria for implementation of the plan**

- Candidates may not be able to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal.

### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of disruption:**

- Consideration to be given on an individual basis as to why they may be unable to attend the examination centre. Special consideration may be applied for; Exams Officer to contact awarding body for guidance as required.
- Consideration to be given to the implementation of an alternative site arrangement. Examination officer to submit JCQ Alternative Site form via Centre Admin Portal.

## 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 disruption:**

- Awarding bodies to provide electronic access to papers via secure external networks; Exams Officer to download electronic copies of papers.
- Exams Officer to ensure copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions.

*Awarding bodies would provide guidance on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances.*

## 12. Disruption to the transportation of 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 disruption:**

- Where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service, Exams Officer to contact the relevant awarding bodies for advice. Materials to remain securely stored in Exams Office secure storage facility until alternative arrangements made for transportation/collection (under the direction of the awarding body)

### 13. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

#### **Criteria for implementation of the plan**

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

#### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:**

- Exams Officer to contact awarding bodies for advice; awarding bodies to generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding organisations. Where marks cannot be generated by the awarding organisation, candidates may need to retake the assessment in a subsequent assessment series.

For moderated units submitted for assessment, a copy of candidate work is forwarded to moderator wherever possible (if in accordance with the awarding body's qualification specification). Candidates' original work is retained under secure conditions at the centre.

### 14. Centre unable to distribute results as normal or to facilitate post results services (including in the event of the centre being unavailable on results day owing to an unforeseen emergency, or in the event of industrial action)

#### **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:**

##### **Distribution of results**

- Exams Officer to liaise with awarding bodies to make arrangements to access results at an alternative site (other schools within the MAT if possible).
- Exams Officer/SLT to liaise with other schools within the MAT to facilitate distribution of results; if this is not possible to contact awarding bodies for advice.

##### **Facilitation of post results services**

- Exams Officer to make arrangements to make post results requests at an alternative location (at other schools within the MAT if possible); if electronic post results requests are not possible, Exams Officer to contact awarding body for advice.

## 15. 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

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**

<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

JCQ Notice to Centres - Examination contingency plan/examinations policy [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/notice-to-centres--exam-contingency-plan/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/notice-to-centres--exam-contingency-plan/)

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

Guidance for centres on cyber security [https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Guidance-for-centres-on-cyber-security\\_23\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Guidance-for-centres-on-cyber-security_23_FINAL.pdf)

### 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](http://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](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service)

Guidance – Bomb Threats <https://www.protectuk.police.uk/threat-risk/security-risk-management>

## National Cyber Security Centre

Key links relating to the NCSC cyber security guidance:

1. [Further ransomware attacks on UK education by cyber criminals - NCSC.GOV.UK](#)
2. [Mitigating malware and ransomware attacks](#)
3. [Offline backups in an online world](#)
4. [Backing up your data](#)
5. [Practical resources to help schools improve their cyber security](#)
6. [Building Resilience: Ransomware, the risk to schools and ways to prevent it](#)
7. [School staff offered training to help shore up cyber defences - NCSC.GOV.UK](#)

## 16. Awarding Bodies

### AQA

0800 197 7162  
[eos@aqa.org.uk](mailto:eos@aqa.org.uk)

### OCR

01223 553998  
[support@ocr.org.uk](mailto:support@ocr.org.uk)

### Pearson

0344 463 2535  
[examsofficers@pearson.com](mailto:examsofficers@pearson.com)

### WJEC

02920 265 077  
[exams@wjec.co.uk](mailto:exams@wjec.co.uk)