Exam Contingency Plan

POLICY

Rednock School
Where everyone matters



Date of Ratification: October 2026
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Responsibility of: Assistant Headteacher

Exam Contingency Plan

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Key staff involved in the plan

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	Mr Mike Stratford
Exams officer line manager (Senior leader)	Mr Ben Cheeseman
Exams officer	Mr Scott Sharp
SENCo	Mrs Sally Easton
Senior leader(s)	Dr Sharron Cunningham Mrs Kerala Cole Mr Michael Merriman Mr Steve White Mrs Demelza Barker Mrs Rebecca Redman Mrs Vicky Wytchard

Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at Rednock 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 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 document *What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted*, and the JCQ guidance **Preparing for disruption to examinations**.

This plan also confirms Rednock School's compliance with JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres** (section 5.3) that:

- The centre has in place for inspection that must be reviewed and updated annually by a member of the senior leadership team and communicated within the centre... a contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination/assessment administration and delivery

- The centre's contingency planning **must** include succession arrangements for members of staff involved in examination and assessment administration

Contingency arrangements

In accordance with the regulations (GR 3.31-36), Rednock School must have in place, and at all times comply with, 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 or alternative sites which can be used 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.

Rednock 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.

Rednock 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 Rednock 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

In the event of absence of the head of centre and/or the senior leader with oversight of examinations the key roles will be undertaken by the Deputy Headteacher with Responsibility for Curriculum. The Business manager will support the Deputy Headteacher in this capacity.

Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

1. Exam officer extended absence at 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 and post-results

- *access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates*
- *the facilitation of the post-results services*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The SLT member in charge of examinations will liaise with the designated member of the school's Data team who supports the exams process and the Senior Invigilator to ensure that the key tasks listed above are actioned by the appropriate team/person to ensure a smooth running of the examination session(s).

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 arrangement requirements*
- *centre fails to recognise its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010*
- *evidence of need and evidence to support normal way of working not collated*

Pre-exams

- *approval for access arrangements not applied for to the awarding body*
- *centre-delegated arrangements not put in place*
- *modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline*
- *staff (facilitators) providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained*

Exam time

- *access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption
• There are two qualified teachers in post that can assess and apply for access arrangements. In the absence of one, the other member of staff can pick up the actions related to access arrangements. Both members of staff attend annual training around the assessment 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 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
• SLT Line Managers and the Exams Officer will liaise with TLR post holders in the relevant subject area(s) and the remaining teaching staff as necessary. • Contact the awarding body for advice and guidance

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
• Planning for the examination series is done early in the examination cycle and invigilator requirements are confirmed well in advance.

- Recruitment and training of invigilators is done well in advance of the examination session.
- Training of other members of staff e.g. Support staff - Cover Supervisors and administrative staff to provide additional capacity in the event of a shortage.

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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- In an emergency the Sixth Form teaching rooms and Music recital room can be used for smaller examinations
- For larger examinations, the Sport's Hall or Sixth Form Centre can be utilised at short notice.
- Under exceptional circumstances, Kingshill House (Kingshill Ln, Dursley GL11 4BZ) and / or the Chantry Centre (34-36 Long St, Dursley GL11 4JB) will be rented.
- Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned.

6. Cyber security

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Where any incidents might compromise any aspect of assessment delivery, such as a cyber-attack

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

(This will include the required arrangements for cyber security) (GR 3.38) Ensure there are procedures in place to maintain the security of user accounts by:

- ensuring that all members of centre staff who access awarding bodies' online systems undertake annual cyber security training.

- The training **must** include:

- the importance of creating strong, unique passwords for all accounts;
- keeping all account details strictly confidential;
- the critical role of Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) in protecting against unauthorised access;
- how to properly set up and use MFA for both centre and awarding bodies' systems;
- an awareness of all types of social engineering/phishing attempts;...
- the importance of staff quickly reporting any suspicious activity, events, incidents and encouraging a safe and supportive reporting culture.

A record of completed cyber security training must be held on file for inspection. This record could take the form of a certificate, a paper checklist, a spreadsheet-based checklist or a Learning Management System (LMS) report.

Developing and maintaining a comprehensive cyber security policy for the centre. The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) provides resources to assist centres in creating such policies;

- implementing and enforcing robust security measures, including:
    - where available, MFA must be used for all accounts and systems containing exam-related information, including those that interface between awarding body and centre systems, to enhance security and protect sensitive data. Where MFA is not available on the centre's systems, an equivalent multi-layered security approach must be in place. For example, strong log-in controls, access and monitoring controls and secure storage so that exam-related data is protected in line with cyber security best practice.
    - regularly reviewing and updating security settings to align with current best practices;
    - updating any passwords that may have been exposed
    - setting up secure account recovery options
    - reviewing and managing connected applications
    - monitoring accounts and regularly reviewing account access, including removing access when no longer required
    - 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' MFA requirements. 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

IT system corruption affecting candidates' work

MIS system failure at final entry deadline

MIS system failure during exams preparation

Technical failure or power outage immediately prior to or during an on-screen examination
MIS system failure at results release time

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

(This will include the security arrangements put in place which protect candidates' work)

(GR 3.36) 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... Implement appropriate security arrangements which protect candidates' work in the event of IT system corruption and cyber-attacks.

- Exams Manager and IT Manager to liaise with the examination boards as to appropriate action.
- Liaise with local secondary/primary Schools to use their hardware to facilitate the examination process.

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

- Follow Appendix 8 of the School's Emergency Evacuation Procedure
- Follow Appendix C of the School's Lockdown Procedures for examination rooms
- In the event that the school receives a bomb threat, invigilators will act on the instruction of SLT if the threat requires an emergency evacuation or lockdown.
- All invigilators and associated examination staff will be trained, annually, in emergency evacuation procedures and lockdown procedures.

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

(Where there is disruption to teaching time and students miss teaching and learning, it remains the responsibility of the centre to prepare students, as usual, for examinations. In the case of unitised courses, the centre may advise candidates to sit examinations in an alternative series

- Head of Centre, Governors and SLT to take the necessary action e.g. providing alternative venues etc. Outer buildings to be used such as the Sixth Form Centre and the Sports Hall to offer face to face teaching.
- Activate the school's online learning provision via google classroom to provide a good quality provision.

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 because of a crisis

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Contact the awarding body and see if the start time of the exam can be delayed (see section 6 of the JCQ document *Instructions for conducting examinations*)
- Have a clear process for the admission of late arrivals to the examination Be aware of the rules for very late arrivals (see section 21 of the JCQ document *Instructions for conducting examinations*)
- Identify whether the student can sit the examination at an alternative venue in agreement with the relevant awarding organisations
- Apply to the awarding organisations for special consideration (see Chapter 4 of the JCQ document *A guide to the special consideration process*)

11. Centre may not be able to open as normal during the examination period

(Including in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Centre may not be able to open as normal for scheduled examinations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

(The centre's contingency plans must focus on enabling candidates to take their examinations if the centre is at risk of not being able to open as normal)

(This could include implementing alternative arrangements for the conducting of examinations and notifying the JCQ Centre Inspection Service of an alternative site arrangement by submitting the JCQ Alternative Site form online, using the Centre Admin Portal (CAP).)

The decision on whether it is safe for a centre to open lies with the head of centre who is responsible for taking advice or following instructions from relevant local or national agencies (For further guidance see: What schools, colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted) Special consideration is an option if all other avenues have been exhausted and candidates meet the published criteria The relevant awarding organisations should be contacted if additional support or guidance in the event of disruption to examinations is required

Alternative site(s) details:

- Examinations Officer to liaise with Head of Centre and inform the awarding bodies
- If possible, open Rednock School for examinations and examination candidates only.
- Consider the use of the Sport's Hall.
- Under exceptional circumstances, Kingshill House (Kingshill Ln, Dursley GL11 4BZ) and / or the Chantry Centre (34-36 Long St, Dursley GL11 4JB) will be rented.
- Apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for students where they have met the minimum requirements.

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 • Examinations Manager to contact the awarding organisation to organise an alternative delivery method. This may include electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network. • Examinations Manager will communicate with the awarding body to confirm that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions. • As a last resort, and in close collaboration with centres and regulators, awarding organisations to consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date. • Awarding organisations to provide centre with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network. Awarding organisations to provide guidance on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances. As a last resort, and in close collaboration with the centre and regulators, awarding organisations to consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date)

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 • Where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding bodies arrange collections, the centre should contact the relevant awarding bodies for advice and instructions For examinations where the centre makes their own collection arrangements, the centre should investigate alternative options that comply with the JCQ's guidance *Instructions for conducting examinations* • The centre to must keep completed examination scripts in the secure room until as close to the collection time as possible – ensuring script packages are not left unattended at the collection area) • When the awarding organisations have approved the mode of transportation then the Exams Officer can action the collection/delivery of scripts to the awarding bodies.

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 *Completed examination scripts/assessment evidence does not reach awarding organisations*
Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption • Awarding organisations 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 awarding organisations candidates may need to retake affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series

15. Centre unable to distribute results as normal or facilitate post results services

(Including in the event of the centre being unavailable on results day owing to an unforeseen emergency)

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 • Rednock to make arrangements to access its results at an alternative site, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation. Possible alternative sites – Sports Hall, Sixth Form Centre or Kingshill House • Make arrangements to coordinate access to post results services from an alternative site • Centre to share facilities with other centres if this is possible, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation.) • Centre to make arrangements to make post-results requests at an alternative location • Centre to contact the relevant awarding organisation if electronic post-results requests are not possible)

Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

- General Regulations for Approved Centres www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations
- JCQ Joint Contingency Plan www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents
- Gov.uk - Exam system contingency plan
- A guide to the special consideration process www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance
- Cyber Security Standards for schools and colleges
- Cyber crime and cyber security: a guide for education providers
- Cyber security: core standard

- 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