



DISCOVERY
EDUCATIONAL TRUST

Examination Contingency Plan 2024/25

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Content

1. Purpose.....	2
National Centre Number Register and Other Information Requirements.....	2
2. Possible Causes of Disruption to the Examination Process.....	2
Head of Centre Absence at a Critical Stage of the Examination Cycle.....	2
Examination Officer - Extended Absence at a Critical Stage of the Examination Cycle	3
SENDCo - Extended Absence at a Critical Stage of the Examination Cycle	4
Teaching Staff - Extended Absence at a Critical Stage of the Examination Cycle	5
Invigilators - Lack of Appropriately Trained Invigilators or Invigilator Absence	5
Examination Rooms - Lack of Appropriate Rooms or Main Venues Unavailable at Short Notice.....	6
Cyber-Attack	7
Failure of IT Systems.....	7
Emergency Evacuation of the Examination Room (or Centre Lockdown)	8
Disruption of Teaching Time in the Weeks before an Examination – Centre Closed for an Extended Period	8
Candidates Unable to take Examinations because of a Crisis – Centre Remains Open.....	8
Centre Unable to Open as Normal during the Examination Period (including in the event of the Centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency.)	9
Disruption in the Distribution of Examination Papers	9
Disruption to the Transportation of Completed Examination Scripts	10
Assessment Evidence is Unavailable to be Marked	11
Centre Unable to Distribute Results as Normal or Facilitate Post-Results Services	11
3. Further Guidance to Inform Procedures and Implement Contingency Planning	13
Department for Education.....	13
Ofqual	13
Joint Council for Qualifications.....	13
GOV.UK	13
Protect UK.....	13
National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC)	13

1. Purpose

This Plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the examination process at Chase High School (CHS) and St. Martin's School (SMS). By outlining actions/procedures to be invoked in case of disruption, the intention is to mitigate the impact that these disruptions have on the CHS and SMS examinations process.

Alongside internal processes at each School, 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](#), and the [Joint Council for Qualifications \(JCQ\) 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 CHS' and SMS' compliance with JCQ's General Regulations for Approved Centres (Section 5.3), namely that the Centres have in place:

- a written examination contingency plan, which covers all aspects of examination administration. This allows members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to act immediately in the event of an emergency or where the Head of Centre, Examinations Officer or SENDCo is absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle. The Examination Contingency Plan should reinforce procedures in the event of the Centres being unavailable for examinations, or on results day, owing to an unforeseen emergency. The potential impact of a cyber-attack should also be considered.

Both CHS and SMS do not operate across another Centre.

National Centre Number Register and Other Information Requirements

The Head of Centre also ensures that **CHS and SMS** have 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 ensures that any urgent matters, which might arise outside of term time and adversely affect candidates, 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 should 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.

2. Possible Causes of Disruption to the Examination Process

Head of Centre Absence at a Critical Stage of the Examination Cycle

Where the Head of Centre may be absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle, main duties and responsibilities are escalated in accordance with the Centre's documented escalation process.

Note that in the event that the Head of Centre decides that the Centre cannot be opened for scheduled examinations, the relevant Awarding Body must be informed as soon as possible. Awarding Bodies are able to offer advice regarding the alternative arrangements for conducting examinations that may be available, and the options for candidates, who have been unable to take scheduled examinations.

Examination Officer - Extended Absence at a Critical Stage of the Examination Cycle

Criteria for implementation of the Plan

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the examination cycle not undertaken including:

- *Planning*
 - annual data collection exercise not undertaken to collate information on qualifications and Awarding Body specifications being delivered;
 - annual Examinations 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 examinations/assessment;
 - Awarding Body entry deadlines missed, or late, or other penalty fees being incurred.
- *Pre-examinations*
 - examination timetabling, rooming allocation and invigilation schedules not prepared;
 - candidates not briefed on examination timetables and Awarding Body information for candidates;
 - examination/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.
- *Examination time*
 - examinations/assessments not taken under the conditions prescribed by Awarding Bodies;
 - required reports/requests not submitted to Awarding Bodies during examination/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.

CHS actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- SLT to liaise with the Examinations Assistant to ensure that all of the tasks have been completed correctly and on time.

SMS actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- A step-by-step guide to the Examinations Officers' duties can be found in <T:\Winpool Main School\OFFICE\Exams CLA>
- Deputy Examinations Officer recruited;
- Cover Manager is an ex- Examinations Officer.

SENDCo - Extended Absence at a Critical Stage of the Examination Cycle

Criteria for implementation of the Plan

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the access arrangements process within the examination cycle not undertaken including:

- *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-examinations*
 - Awarding Body approval for access arrangements not applied for;
 - 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.
- *Examination time*
 - access arrangement candidate support not arranged for examination rooms.

CHS actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The Assistant SENDCo works alongside the SENDCo ensuring that there are two people present with knowledge of the examination system. All of the SENDCo, Assistant SENDCo and the SEND Administration Assistant work with the Assistant Headteacher (Examinations) to implement actions.

SMS actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- SEND Examinations Clerical Support appointed;
- Examinations Officer to apply for modified papers;
- Examinations Officer to train and allocate invigilators.

Teaching Staff - Extended Absence at a Critical Stage of the Examination Cycle

Criteria for implementation of the Plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

- Early/estimated entry information not provided to the Examinations Officer on time, resulting in pre-release information not being received;
- Final entry information not provided to the Examinations Officer on time; resulting in candidates not being entered for examination/assessment, 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.

CHS actions to mitigate the impact of disruption

- The school system allows for a Subject Leader in each area. Senior Team Link staff are also able to step in. This means that there should always be a member of staff available with knowledge of the examination system.

SMS actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Contact Head of Department, Deputy Head of Faculty, Head of Faculty for information;
- Examinations Officer to analyse and check for integrity;
- Non-Examination Assessments timeline sent to staff;
- Letters and Non-Examination Assessment results sent to parents/carers by deadline agreed.

Invigilators - Lack of Appropriately Trained Invigilators or Invigilator Absence

Criteria for implementation of the Plan

- Failure to recruit and train sufficient invigilators to conduct examinations;
- Invigilator shortage on peak examination days;
- Invigilator absence on the day of an examination.

CHS actions to mitigate the impact of disruption

- Centre staff have been trained in the role of invigilator and are expected to be on hand, if required.

SMS actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Examinations Officer to recruit Invigilators annually;
- Examinations Officer to conduct two invigilator training sessions per academic year;
- Bank of trained administrative staff to invigilate when/if there is a shortage;
- Deputy Examinations Officer to cover until another invigilator can take over.

Examination Rooms - Lack of Appropriate Rooms or Main Venues Unavailable at Short Notice

Criteria for implementation of the Plan

- Examinations Officer unable to identify sufficient/appropriate rooms during examination timetable planning;
- Insufficient rooms available on peak examination days;
- Main examination venues unavailable due to an unexpected incident at examination time.

CHS actions to mitigate the impact of disruption

- Room planning is done in advance of the examination season, and shortages highlighted;
- Regular meeting with SLT to solve any issues;
- CHS has two sports halls, two drama studios and a school assembly hall, which can all be used if usual venues are unavailable;
- Additionally, if the entire school is affected, CHS has an agreement with Lancaster School, which is located next to CHS, to use its facilities;
- Pupils will be informed of the change of venue via text and email;
- Equipment used in examinations, including desks and chairs will be moved by the Site Team due to proximity of the contingency site;
- The Awarding Bodies would be notified of alternative arrangements.

SMS actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Liaise with Cover Manager to arrange suitable rooms;
- Use PA Hall as an alternative venue in case of emergency;

- Additionally, if the entire school is affected, SMS has an agreement with Shenfield School, which is located within two miles, to use its facilities;
- The Awarding Bodies would be notified of alternative arrangements.

Cyber-Attack

Criteria for implementation of the Plan

- Contact Awarding Bodies about implementing contingency days;
- Apply special considerations;
- Full back-ups kept primary and secondary to restore network, but this could take up to five working days;
- Access examination information via Awarding Bodies' school website (results etc.);
- Record everything manually until system is restored from back-up.

SMS actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Contact Awarding Bodies about implementing contingency days;
- Apply special considerations;
- Full back-ups kept primary and secondary to restore network, but this could take up to five working days;
- Access examination information via Awarding Bodies' school website (results etc.);
- Record everything manually until system is restored from back-up.

Failure of IT Systems

Criteria for implementation of the Plan

- MIS system failure at final entry deadline;
- MIS system failure during examination preparation;
- MIS system failure at results release time.

CHS actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Entries to be submitted one week early;
- Remote access via the cloud;
- Print statements of results from Awarding Bodies.

SMS actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Entries to be submitted one week early;
- Remote access via the cloud;
- Print statements of results from Awarding Bodies.

Emergency Evacuation of the Examination Room (or Centre Lockdown)

Criteria for implementation of the Plan

Whole Centre evacuation (or lockdown) during examination time due to serious incident resulting in examination candidates being unable to start, proceed with or complete their examinations.

CHS actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Contact Awarding Body about using the contingency day;
- Move examinations to another Discovery Educational Trust school.

SMS actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Contact Awarding Body about using the contingency day;
- Shenfield School to accommodate SMS examinations;
- Move examinations to another Discovery Educational Trust school.

Disruption of Teaching Time in the Weeks before an Examination – Centre Closed for an Extended Period

Criteria for implementation of the Plan

- Centre is 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.

CHS actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The Centre to communicate with parents, carers and candidates about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this.

SMS actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The Centre to communicate with parents, carers and candidates about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this.

Candidates Unable to take Examinations because of a Crisis – Centre Remains Open

Criteria for implementation of the Plan

- Candidates are unable to attend the Centre to take examinations as normal.

CHS actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Examinations Officer to communicate with relevant Awarding Bodies at the outset to make them aware of the issue.
- Examinations Officer to communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issue.

SMS actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Examinations Officer to communicate with relevant Awarding Bodies at the outset to make them aware of the issue.
- Examinations Officer to communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issue.

Centre Unable 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 unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations.

CHS actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The local football club, sports centre, civic centre and college all have large appropriate venues. The Awarding Bodies would be notified of alternative arrangements.

SMS actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Inform each Awarding Body with which examinations are due to be taken as soon as possible;
- Explore possibilities at taking examinations at nearby centre, such as Shenfield High School;
- Move examinations to another Discovery Educational Trust school.

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.

CHS and SMS actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The Centre to communicate with Awarding Bodies to organise alternative delivery of papers;
- Site Staff to inform the Examinations Officer of any planned works or closures that may affect delivery;
- (Awarding Bodies to provide Centre with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network. Centres would need to ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions and should have plans in place to facilitate such an action. Awarding Bodies would provide guidance on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances. As a last resort, and in close collaboration with Centres and regulators, Awarding Bodies to consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date).

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.

CHS actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The Centre to communicate with relevant Awarding Bodies, at the outset, to resolve the issue;
- Examinations Officer to contact the courier to raise concerns;
- Examinations Officer to take examination scripts to local Post Office for collection;
- where examinations are part of the National 'yellow label' service or where Awarding Bodies arrange collections, the Centre contacts the relevant Awarding Bodies for advice and instructions and does 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 collection arrangements, it investigates alternative options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ publication *Instructions for conducting examinations*;
- ensure secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection.

SMS actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The Centre to communicate with relevant Awarding Bodies, at the outset, to resolve the issue;
- Examinations Officer to contact the courier to raise concerns;
- Examinations Officer to take examination scripts to local Post Office for collection;
- where examinations are part of the National 'yellow label' service or where Awarding Bodies arrange collections, the Centre contacts the relevant Awarding Bodies for advice and instructions and does 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 collection arrangements, it investigates alternative options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ publication *Instructions for conducting examinations*;
- ensure secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection.

Assessment Evidence is Unavailable 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 Bodies.

CHS actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- It is the responsibility of the Head of Centre to communicate this immediately to the relevant Awarding Bodies and subsequently to candidates and their parents or carers;
- Awarding Bodies to generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the Awarding Bodies;
- where marks cannot be generated by Awarding Bodies, candidates may need to retake affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series.

SMS actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- It is the responsibility of the Head of Centre to communicate this immediately to the relevant Awarding Bodies and subsequently to candidates and their parents or carers;
- Awarding Bodies to generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the Awarding Bodies;
- where marks cannot be generated by Awarding Bodies, candidates may need to retake affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series.

Centre Unable to Distribute Results as Normal 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.

CHS actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Centre to contact Awarding Bodies about alternative options;
- Centre to explore other options to print results, such as using another Centre to download results from Awarding Bodies' secure websites;
- Print statement of results from Awarding Bodies;
- Results downloaded using remote access;
- Candidates receive results through online portal;
- Centre to arrange to make post-results requests at an alternative location;
- Centre to contact the relevant Awarding Body (if electronic post-results requests are not possible);

SMS actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Centre to contact Awarding Bodies about alternative options;
- Centre to explore other options to print results, such as using another Centre to download results from Awarding Bodies' secure websites;
- Print statement of results from Awarding Bodies;
- Results downloaded using remote access;
- Candidates receive results through online portal;
- Centre to arrange to make post-results requests at an alternative location;
- Centre to contact the relevant Awarding Body (if electronic post-results requests are not possible);
- Alternative Site – Larchwood Primary School (part of Discovery Educational Trust).

3. Further Guidance to Inform Procedures and Implement Contingency Planning

Department for Education

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 examinations or other assessments are seriously disrupted](#)

Joint Council for Qualifications

[Notice to Centres - exam contingency plan.](#)

General Regulations for Approved Centres 2024-2025 - 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.

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 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service>

Protect UK

Plan to Prepare, Prepare to Protect - www.protectuk.police.uk

National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC)

The NCSC's free [Web Check](#) and [Mail Check](#) services can help protect schools from cyber-attacks. Two NCSC cyber security services, which are already helping thousands of organisations to protect their websites and email servers from cyber-attacks, are now available **to all UK schools**. Both tools are available free of charge, are quick to set up, and thereafter run automatically. More information is available from the [NCSC website](#).

The Department for Education (DfE) has asked Centres to review National Cyber Security Centre advice following increasing number of cyber-attacks involving ransomware infections. The NCSC information supports Centres in cyber security preparedness and mitigation work.

Ransomware attacks continue and the DfE has reminded Centres to review the NCSC advice and to take precautions. This includes ensuring that a Centre has backups in place for all key services and data.

For ease of reference, the DfE has highlighted key links relating to the NCSC cyber security guidance below:

1. [More ransomware attacks on UK education - NCSC.GOV.UK](#)
2. [Ransomware advice and guidance for your IT teams to implement](#)
3. [Offline backups in an online world](#)
4. [Backing up your data](#)
5. [Practical resources to help improve your cyber security](#)
6. [Cyber security training for school staff](#) – NCSC.GOV.UK