

This policy was reviewed in: **October 2023**
This policy is due to be reviewed in: **October 2024**

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
Head of Centre	Helen Ness-Gifford, Headmistress
Assessor	Lisa Britnell, Head of Individual Learning
Examinations Senior Leader	Caroline Derbyshire, Deputy Head Academic
Head of Individual Learning	Lisa Britnell
Senior Leaders	Andy Codling, Assistant Head Academic; Emma Cresswell, Assistant Head Operations; Alex Rees, Assistant Head Digital Learning

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The purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the examinations process at Pipers Corner School. By outlining actions/procedures to be invoked in case of disruption it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on our examination 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 examinations or other assessments are seriously disrupted” and 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 Pipers Corner School compliance with JCQ’s **General Regulations for Approved Centres** that the Centre has in place:

- a written examination contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the Senior Leadership Team to act immediately in the event of an emergency or where the Head of Centre, Examination Officer or Head of Individual Learning is absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle. The examination contingency plan should reinforce procedures in the event of the Centre being unavailable for examinations, or on results day, owing to an unforeseen emergency

National Centre Number Register and other information requirements

The Head of Centre will also ensure that Pipers has 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. Heads 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.

Possible causes of disruption to the examination process

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

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

- invigilators not trained or updated on changes to instructions for conducting examinations
- examination timetabling, rooming allocation; and invigilation schedules not prepared
- candidates not briefed on examination timetables and awarding body information for candidates

- confidential 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, 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

- Annual briefing of examination procedures for all key holders
- Examination key safe code to be held secure in bursary safe and key holders advised
- Assistant Examination Officer to assume responsibility with the support of Senior Leadership Team
- Head to appoint acting Examination Officer as soon as possible
- Examination Boards to be advised and kept informed

Head of Individual Learning extended absence at a critical stage of 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
- 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-examinations

- 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

Examination time

- access arrangement candidate support not arranged for examination rooms

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Second in the Individual Learning Department to assume responsibility and where necessary employment of outside professionals

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 examinations/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

- Head to appoint acting Head of Department or subject teacher, as required.
- Examination Office to liaise with Second in Department or Deputy Head Academic.
- Examination Office to liaise with acting Head of Department and or Deputy Head Academic.
- Examination Office informs the Examination Board and disseminates information to appropriate persons, ensuring the Head and Deputy Head Academic is kept fully informed.

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- All academic Centre staff to be trained invigilators
- Where necessary to employ invigilators
- If necessary, reseat examinations to reduce the number of invigilators required

Exam 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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Liaise with Assistant Head and Deputy Head Academic once requirements have been identified
- Re-room Year 7, 8, 9 or 10 lessons if necessary to accommodate examinations
- Re-seat examinations, if possible, to reduce the number of rooms required
- Contact local conference venues (Missenden Abbey for example)
- Contact local company to erect a temporary marquee/building

Failure of IT systems

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The Examinations Office should store all files on O365 (SharePoint ideally) such that should any failure of IT systems occur the school is able to recover the files to a standalone device should this be necessary.

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Examination Officer to liaise with IT Department and or Awarding Body
- In the event of a cyber-attack the Centre will:
 - Refer to the Emergency Policy and Plan
 - Report the incident to the NCSC: <https://ncsc.gov.uk/>
 - Contact our local law enforcement and Action Fraud: <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/>
 - Inform the DfE by contacting: <https://www.gov.uk/contact-dfe>

In the event of a Cyber Attack

Should a cyber-attack occur on our network that compromises any aspect of delivery:

- Take immediate advice from IT Support as to which systems are safe to use
- Only log on or off the network if IT Support confirm that this is safe
- If required following advice the Examinations Office may need to resort to:
 - Working from standalone laptops not connected to the network
 - Connecting to remote databases (e.g. iSAMS, Pearson) via alternate connection options such as 4G
 - Working from different locations (e.g. not on school site)
 - If necessary, move to a paper based system

Where a cyber-attack occurs on any remote system (e.g. Pearson, iSAMS, Microsoft...) that compromises any aspect of delivery the examination office will:

- Liaise with both the School's IT Support department and the remote system's IT Support service to establish what approach to take
- Continue to follow advice from both services

Data Protection Key Points:

The section on 'Data Protection' in the School's 'Staff Handbook' reminds all staff of their obligations in relation to data protection and reads as follows:

Data Protection Use of Email and Management Information Software (MIS) Confidentiality is at the heart of these guidelines. The General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) clearly state that we must protect our data and maintain the privacy of our data subjects (staff and students). Potentially sensitive and confidential data must not be disclosed to any other individual by accident or intention.

The School has a responsibility to manage data in accordance with GDPR. Details of how the school stores and manages data can be found in the Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices on SharePoint. The 'Data Protection Policy' sets out in detail the School's approach to the management of personal data. The scope of the policy includes personal data held in both paper and electronic records. The 'Information and Records Retention Policy' sets out the School's structured approach to reviewing and destroying records in relation to the School. The retention period for each type of record (including information on internal and public examination scripts, marks and results) is detailed in a table. The policy applies to paper records, electronic information and biometric information

- MIS is 100% web-based accessible anywhere anytime
- Examination Officer laptop is prepared for A2C use

Emergency evacuation of the examination room (or Centre lock down)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Examination room emergency evacuation procedure to be followed
- The procedure must be available in every examination room
- Examination boards to be advised at the earliest opportunity
- See Examination Lockdown Policy

Disruption of teaching time in the weeks before an examination – 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

- Implement the Remote Learning Policy
- Examination Boards to be advised at the earliest opportunity

Candidates may not be able to take examinations because of a crisis – Centre remains open

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Liaise with Examination Boards
- Liaise with Assistant Head and Deputy Head Academic once requirements have been identified
- Contact local conference venues (Missenden Abbey for example)
- Inform parents, carers, staff and candidates of all options which may include alternative venue, alternative session and special consideration (if applicable), the list is not exhaustive.

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 unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Follow all national/local guidelines
- Liaise with Examination Boards
- Liaise with Assistant Head and Deputy Head Academic once requirements have been identified
- Contact local conference venues (Missenden Abbey for example)
- Inform parents, carers, staff and candidates of all options which may include alternative venue, alternative session and special consideration (if applicable), the list is not exhaustive

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

- Inform Examination Board at the earliest opportunity
- Awarding organisation to provide Centre with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network. Centre 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 organisation would provide guidance on the conduct of examination in such circumstances.

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 the disruption

- Where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding organisations arrange collections, Centres should seek advice from awarding organisations and should not make their own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding organisation.
- For any examinations where Centres make their own arrangements for transportation, Centres should investigate alternative dispatch options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations. Centre to ensure secure storage of completed examination papers until collection.

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

- Advise the Head of Centre
- Advise the Examination Board at the earliest opportunity and follow their directive

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

- MIS is 100% web-based accessible anywhere anytime
- Examination Officer laptop is prepared for A2C use
- Distribution of results: remote access via portal at agreed day and time adhering to JCQ rules and regulation
- Post results services: Centre to manage electronic post result requests

Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

DfE

Cyber Security Standards for schools and colleges
DfE Cyber Security Guidance – March 2023

Ofqual

What schools and colleges and other Centres should do if examinations or other assessments are seriously disrupted

1. Contingency planning

You should prepare for possible disruption to examinations and other assessments and make sure staff are aware of these plans.

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

1.1 General contingency guidance

- [Emergency planning and response](#) from the Department for Education in England

- [Opening and closing local-authority-maintained schools](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [Procedures for handling bomb threats](#) from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office

2. Disruption to assessments or examinations

In the absence of any instruction from the relevant awarding organisation, you should make sure that any examination 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 examination or assessment cannot take place
- a student misses an examination or loses their assessment due to an emergency, or other event, outside of the student's control

See also:

[JCQ Joint Contingency Plan for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland](#)

3. Steps you should take

3.1 Examination planning

Review contingency plans well in advance of each examination 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

- Contact the relevant awarding organisation and follow their instructions
- Take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether your Centre is able to open
- Identify whether the examination 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
- Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their examination or timetabled assessment when planned
- In the event of an evacuation during an examination please refer to JCQ's Centre emergency evacuation procedure
- Communicate with parents, carers and students any changes to the examination or assessment timetable or to the venue
- Communicate with any external assessors or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the examination or assessment timetable

3.3 After the examination

- 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
- Advise students, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their examination or assessment at a later date
- Ensure that scripts are stored under secure conditions
- Return scripts to awarding organisations in line with their instructions. Never make alternative arrangements for the transportation of completed examination scripts, unless told to do so by the awarding organisation

4. Steps the awarding organisation should take

4.1 Examination planning

- Establish and maintain, and at all times comply with, an up to date, written contingency plan
- 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 examination

- 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 examinations could have been affected by the disruption

5. If any students miss an examination 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 to the taking of examinations / assessments

As education is devolved, in the event of any widespread sustained national disruption to examinations or assessments, national 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 examination timetables.

We will update this page as necessary should national disruption occur with any further relevant links.

JCQ

1. The qualification regulators, awarding bodies 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.
2. In addition, awarding bodies have their own well-established contingency plans in place to respond to disruptions. It is important that Examination Officers who are facing disruption liaise directly with the relevant awarding body/bodies.

3. All Centres must have a written Examination Contingency Plan which covers all aspects of examination administration. This 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 Head of Individual Learning is absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle. The Examination Contingency Plan should reinforce procedures in the event of the Centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency.
All relevant Centre staff must be familiar with the Examination Contingency Plan. Consideration should be given as to how these arrangements will be communicated to candidates, parents and staff should disruption to examinations occur.
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.
5. The awarding bodies will designate 'contingency sessions' for examinations, Summer 2024. This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document Examination 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 sessions' 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 2024, 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 last 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 the contingency arrangements so that they may take them into account when making their plans for the summer.

(JCQ guidance above taken directly from **Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2023-2024** <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

JCQ Notice - Preparing for disruption to examinations www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/

JCQ Notice to Centres – Examination contingency plan/examination policy www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/notice-to-centres-exams-contingency-plan/

General Regulations for Approved Centres 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: Severe weather; Exam 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>