

EXAMS CONTINGENCY (Trentham)

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VERSION CONTROL

Version No:	Type of change	Date	Revisions from previous version
0.1	New Document	Dec 2021	New Policy
0.2	Annual Review	May 2022	Proof Reading updates, no other changes
0.3	Annual review	Jan 2023	Annual review, complete update of section 7-9

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1. STATUS

- a. Non statutory.

2. INTRODUCTION

- a. Trentham Academy fully recognises its responsibilities for upholding JCQ regulations and Ofqual guidance to ensure the exam process is robust and protects the outcomes for our students.

3. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- a. This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at Trentham Academy. 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.
- b. 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 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 notice Preparing for disruption to examinations (effective from 11 October 2021).
- c. This plan also confirms Trentham Academy's compliance with JCQ's General Regulations for Approved Centres (section 5.3).

4. EQUALITY IMPACT

- a. Trentham Academy, must, under our Equality Act 2010 obligations, continue to make reasonable adjustments for candidates with special educational needs and disabilities. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) will ensure that the access arrangement is still appropriate, practicable and reasonable. In the event of a candidate's circumstances changing, the SENCO may (where required) need to produce evidence and process an online application.

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

- a. The objective of this policy is to mitigate the effect of disruption to the exams process at Trentham Academy. This will enable members of the senior leadership team to act immediately in the event of an emergency or staff absence. The examination contingency plan reinforces procedures in the event of Trentham Academy being unavailable for examinations, or on results day, owing to an unforeseen emergency.

6. CAUSES OF DISRUPTION AND ACTIONS

6.1 Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle)

6.1.1 Criteria for Implementation of the Plan

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

- a. Planning
 - i. annual data collection exercise not undertaken to collate information on qualifications and awarding body specifications being delivered
 - ii. annual exams plan not produced identifying essential key tasks, key dates and deadlines
 - iii. sufficient invigilators not recruited
- b. Entries
 - i. awarding bodies not being informed of early/estimated entries which prompts release of early information required by teaching staff
 - ii. candidates not being entered with awarding bodies for external exams/assessment
 - iii. awarding body entry deadlines missed or late or other penalty fees being incurred
- c. Pre-exams
 - i. invigilators not trained or updated on changes to instructions for conducting exams
 - ii. exam timetabling, rooming allocation; and invigilation schedules not prepared
 - iii. candidates not briefed on exam timetables and awarding body information for candidates
 - iv. confidential exam/assessment materials and candidates' work not stored under required secure conditions
 - v. internal assessment marks and samples of candidates' work not submitted to awarding bodies/external moderators

- d. Exam time
 - i. exams/assessments not taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding bodies
 - ii. required reports/requests not submitted to awarding bodies during exam/assessment periods, for example very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration
 - iii. candidates' scripts not dispatched as required for marking to awarding bodies
- e. Results and post-results
 - i. access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates
 - ii. the facilitation of the post-results services

6.1.2 Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption

- a. Additional Trust personnel to be redeployed as and when necessary. These staff are fully trained and conversant with examination administration processes and procedures.

6.2 SENCO Extended Absence at Key Points in the Exam Cycle

6.2.1 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:

- a. Planning
 - ii. candidates not tested/assessed to identify potential access arrangement requirements
 - iii. centre fails to recognise its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010
 - iv. evidence of need and evidence to support normal way of working not collated
- b. Pre-exams
 - i. approval for access arrangements not applied for to the awarding body
 - ii. centre-delegated arrangements not put in place
 - iii. modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline
 - iv. staff (facilitators) providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained
- c. Exam time
 - i. access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms

6.2.2 Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption

- a. Director of Inclusion is aware of and oversees all SEND examination processes and is able to deputise in the event of the SENCO and Assistant SENCO being absent.
- b. SENCO and Assistant SENCO along with the Examinations Officer to review deadlines and approval from awarding bodies for access arrangements. Access arrangements and submission on the on-line portal to be completed well in advance of each series of examinations, taking into account deadlines. Deadlines set by the Internal Assessment and Data Calendar at the start of the academic year.
- c. Examination Officer to submit a plan for the Exam rooms/students to the Inclusion Lead and SENCO prior to each examination series to allocate staff for candidate support. Any absence on the day of the exam will be covered by other SEND staff in the academy
- d. All SEND staff are fully trained to support the delivery of access arrangements

6.3 Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle

6.3.1 Criteria for Implementation of the Plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

- a. Early/estimated entry information not provided to the exams officer on time; resulting in pre-release information not being received
- b. 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
- c. Non-examination assessment tasks not set/issued/taken by candidates as scheduled

- d. 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
- e. Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet awarding body submission deadlines

6.3.2 Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption

- a. HODs, SLs, SLPs hold regular departmental meetings where each individual students' progress is discussed. Data and assessment calendar is shared with all Leaders at the start of each Academic year in order to facilitate the planning to ensure all external and internal deadlines are met.
- b. All data entered is moderated and standardised following data input for each subject area prior to submission to awarding bodies. The Data Manager will check that all necessary marks/grades required are available and submitted in advance of the final awarding body deadline.
- c. SLT link to discuss all entries with SLP in advance of the deadline.

6.4 Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence

6.4.1 Criteria for Implementation of the Plan

- a. Failure to recruit and train sufficient invigilators to conduct exams
- b. Invigilator shortage on peak exam days
- c. Invigilator absence on the day of an exam

6.4.2 Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption

- a. Internal Centre staff are trained and are able to step-in, in the event of invigilator shortage. External supply staff to be utilised where necessary.
- b. Trust support and sharing of invigilators
- c. Additional invigilators appointed as back up for absences.

6.5 Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice

6.5.1 Criteria for Implementation of the Plan

- a. Exams officer unable to identify sufficient/appropriate rooms during exams timetable planning
- b. Insufficient rooms available on peak exam days
- c. Main exam venues unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time

6.5.2 Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption

- a. Main Hall and Sports Hall can be interchanged should an event occur on the examination day that does not affect whole site processes.
- b. In the event of both rooms being unavailable, other Trust premises will be utilised (Trentham Academy, Haywood Academy, Mill Hill Academy, City College, Smallthorne Primary).
- c. Amend start times of examinations in line with JCQ regulations and communication with awarding bodies.
- d. Additional rooms will be repurposed throughout the school to accommodate Access Arrangements, smaller examinations, etc as appropriate.
- e. Where accommodation is limited, priority will be given to students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned.

6.6 Failure of IT systems

6.6.1 Criteria for Implementation of the Plan

- a. MIS system failure at final entry deadline
- b. MIS system failure during exams preparation
- c. MIS system failure at results release time

6.6.2 Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption

- a. Examination Officer will keep paper copies of all exam entries submitted by SLs – deadline and processing to take place at least 1 week in advance of final entry deadline.
- b. In the event of MIS being unavailable, entries will be entered directly on the examination boards websites. This can be facilitated at other Trust sites.
- c. Timetables and seating plans etc can be prepared using excel spreadsheets. Templates are set up in advance to help facilitate this process.
- d. Results can be downloaded direct from the awarding bodies websites at other Trust sites.

6.7 Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down)

6.7.1 Criteria for Implementation of the Plan

- a. 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

6.7.2 Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption

- a. Lockdown and Fire procedures are in place and practiced on a regular basis
- b. Where possible exams will proceed in line with the examination policy and in line with JCQ regulations and communication with awarding bodies.
- c. All examination papers will be kept as secure as possible.
- d. Students will be kept apart as far as practicable.
- e. Examination boards will be informed as soon as possible and advice sought.
- f. Refer to JCQ's Centre Emergency Evacuation Procedure

6.8 Disruption in Teaching Time in the Weeks before an Exam - Centre Closed for an Extended Period

6.8.1 Criteria for Implementation of the Plan

- a. 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

6.8.2 Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption

- a. Where there is disruption to teaching time and students miss teaching and learning, it remains the responsibility of Trentham Academy to prepare students, as usual, for examinations.
- b. In the case of modular courses, Trentham Academy may advise candidates to sit examinations in an alternative series.
- c. Trentham Academy has plans in place to facilitate alternative methods of learning eg. Online teaching through Zoom or MS Teams

6.9 Candidates at Risk of being unable to take Examinations - Centre remains open

6.9.1 Criteria for Implementation of the Plan

- a. Candidates at risk of being unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal

6.9.2 Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption

- a. If all candidates for an examination are affected the starting times of the examination may be reviewed (section 6.2 of the JCQ publication Instructions for conducting examinations)
- b. Being aware of the rules for very late arrivals (section 21 of the JCQ publication Instructions for conducting examinations).
- c. In the event of being unable to attend Trentham Academy, where possible, we will make arrangements for the candidates to sit their examination at an alternative site eg. Hospital, home in line with JCQ ICE Regulations. Invigilators from the centre will be used to facilitate these arrangements.

- d. Where a candidate misses an examination completely, the centre will apply for Special Consideration arrangements for the candidate in line with JCQ regulations.
- e. Candidates will read the safer travel guidance before planning their journey to the exam.
- f. Face coverings will be worn outside the classrooms and exam rooms prior to the start of the exam.

6.10 Centre at risk of being unable to open as normal during the Examination Period

6.10.1 Criteria for Implementation of the Plan

- a. Centre at risk of being unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations

6.10.2 Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption

- a. Candidates will be informed of alternative site arrangements (via Google classroom, Sharepoint, MyEd, Web-site) which may become applicable before or during an examination series.
- b. Minibuses will be on standby to ensure candidates can be transported to alternative sites where applicable.

6.11 Disruption in the Distribution of Examination Papers

6.11.1 Criteria for Implementation of the Plan

- a. Disruption to the distribution of examination papers to the centre in advance of examinations

6.11.2 Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption

- a. Awarding organisations will provide Trentham Academy with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network. Trentham Academy will ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions and have plans in place to facilitate such an action. Awarding organisations would provide guidance on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances.
- b. As a last resort, and in close collaboration with Trentham Academy and regulators, awarding organisations to consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date.

6.12 Disruption to Transporting Completed Examination Scripts

6.12.1 Criteria for Implementation of the Plan

- a. Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts/assessment evidence

6.12.2 Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption

- a. Where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding bodies arrange collections, Trentham Academy will contact the relevant awarding bodies for advice and instructions and we will not make our own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding body.
- b. Trentham Academy will ensure secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection.

6.13 Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

6.13.1 Criteria for Implementation of the Plan

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

6.13.2 Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption

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

6.14 Centre unable to distribute results as normal or facilitate post results services

(including in the event of the Trentham Academy being unavailable on results day owing to an unforeseen emergency)

6.14.1 Criteria for Implementation of the Plan

- a. Centre is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates, or to facilitate post-results services.

6.14.2 Centre Actions to Mitigate the Impact of the Disruption

- a. Distribution of results: Trentham Academy will make arrangements to access its results at an alternative site, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation.
- b. Trentham Academy will make arrangements to coordinate access to post results services from an alternative site.
- c. Trentham Academy will share facilities with other Trust centres if this is possible, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation.
- d. Facilitation of post results services: Trentham Academy will make arrangements to make post results requests at an alternative location.
- e. Trentham Academy to contact the relevant awarding organisation if electronic post results requests are not possible.

7. FURTHER GUIDANCE AND CONTACT INFORMATION

7.1 Ofqual

7.1.1 Contingency Planning

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

7.1.2 Emergency Planning and Response to Health Protection in Schools

- a. The national cancellation of exams – and the need for alternative assessment arrangements – is now very unlikely. The government does not expect to ever be in the situation again where exams do not go ahead, but good public policy means having contingency, even for extremely unlikely scenarios.
- b. City Learning Trust Health Protection in schools Emergency Planning and Response should be read in conjunction with, and aligned to City Learning Trust Business Continuity Plans, which cover emergency planning and business continuity for a wide range of circumstances, including Public Health emergencies. Government, Ofqual and UKHSA guidance will be followed at all times.
- c. The following guidance should be considered:
 - i. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-resilience-in-the-exam-system-in-2023/supporting-resilience-in-the-exam-system-in-2023> Ofqual guidance.
 - ii. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings>
 - iii. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities> Health Protection in Schools as updated February 2023
 - iv. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-living-with-covid-19?utm_source=21%20February%202022%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19 Government guidance - Covid Response: Living with Covid.
 - v. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vtq-results-action-plan-measures-for-2023> VTQ Action Plan 2023

7.1.3 General Contingency Guidance

- a. [emergency planning and response](#) from the Department for Education in England
- b. [school organisation: local-authority-maintained schools](#) from the Department for Education in England

7.1.4 Wider Communications

- a. The regulators, [Ofqual](#) in England, [Qualifications Wales](#) in Wales, will share timely and accurate information, as required, with awarding organisations, government departments and other stakeholders.
- b. The [Department for Education](#) in England, 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.

- c. 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.
- d. Awarding organisations will alert relevant professional bodies or employer groups if the impact of disruption particularly affects them.

7.2 JCQ

- a. 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.
- b. Further information may be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>
- c. In addition, awarding bodies have their own well-established contingency plans in place to respond to disruptions. It is important that exams officers who are facing disruption liaise directly with the relevant awarding body/bodies.
- d. Centres should prepare plans for any disruption to examinations as part of their general emergency planning. It is important to ensure that relevant centre staff are familiar with the plan. Consideration should be given as to how these arrangements will be communicated to candidates, parents and staff should disruption to examinations occur.
- e. 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.
- f. The awarding bodies will designate 'contingency days' for examinations, summer 2023. This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>
- g. The designation of 'contingency days' 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.
- h. In the event of national disruption to a day of examinations in summer 2023, 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.
- i. 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. However, the awarding bodies will not insist upon candidates being available throughout the entire timetable period as a matter of course.
- j. JCQ guidance above taken directly from **Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2022-2023** section 15, Contingency planning. https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/ICE_22-23_Oct22_FINAL.pdf

7.3 Contacting the Awarding Bodies

a. In all cases, if there are any concerns, please contact the relevant awarding body for advice:

7.3.1 AQA 0800 197 7162 eos@aqa.org.uk	7.3.2 OCR 01223 553998 support@ocr.org.uk	7.3.3 Pearson 0344 463 2535	7.3.4 WJEC 02920 265 077 exams@wjec.co.uk
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- a. General Regulations for Approved Centres: www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations
- b. Guidance notes on alternative site arrangements: www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms
- c. Guidance notes for transferred candidates: www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms
- d. Instructions for Conducting Examinations: www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations
- e. A guide to the special consideration process: www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance

7.3.5 GOV.UK

- a. Emergency planning and response: www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings
- b. www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools
- c. 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>

7.3.6 National Counter Terrorism Security Office

- a. Guidance - Bomb Threats www.gov.uk/government/publications/crowded-places-guidance/bomb-threats

8. LINK TO OTHER POLICIES

- a. Exams Procedures.

9. MONITORING AND REVIEW

- a. This policy has been approved by the Board of Trustees. It will be reviewed by the Policy and Procedures Working Group on an annual basis to ensure continuing compliance.