



HONLEY HIGH SCHOOL EXAM CONTINGENCY PLAN

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Approved by	Mrs E lord – Head of School	Date: March 2024
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This plan is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

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1 Key Staff Involved in the Plan

Role	Name(s)
Head of Centre	Mrs E Lord – Head of School
Exams Officer line manager (Senior Leader)	Mr P Oliver, Assistant Headteacher
Exams Officer	Mrs L Winston
ALS Lead/SENDCo	Mrs S Bardell, SENDCo
Senior Leader(s)	Miss S Hansom, Deputy Headteacher Mrs H Halliday, Assistant Headteacher

Purpose of the Plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at Honley High 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 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.

This plan also confirms Honley High School's compliance with JCQ's General Regulations for Approved Centres (section 5.3) 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 staff absence. 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. The potential impact of a cyber attack should also be considered.

Possible Causes of Disruption to the Exam Process

Exams Officer Extended Absence at Key Points in the Exam Process (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

- Head of Centre to appoint member of administrative staff to take over responsibilities should absence of the Exams Officer have the potential to affect the meeting of deadlines
- Administrative staff member to work closely with the Exams Officer to ensure they are up to date with the exam cycle and responsibilities at each point in time. This will be done under the supervision of the Assistant Headteacher (Student Outcomes) and Head of Centre

ALS Lead/SENDCo Extended Absence at Key Points in 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

- Head of Centre responsible for ensuring position is filled should absence have the potential to disrupt exam preparation
- Exams Officer to ensure access arrangements are in place by the Spring term of Year 10 for all students where possible
- Exams Officer to plan access arrangements for exam days in advance of the Summer series, in consultation with SENDCo and Specialist Assessor

Teaching Staff Extended Absence at Key Points in 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

- Exams Officer responsible for ensuring deadlines are met for estimated entries. Any omissions to be referred to Head of Centre
- Centre responsible for ensuring the priority for teaching is the examination cohort and staff will be covered in good time, by trained professionals, in all circumstances

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

- Exams Officer responsible for recruitment of Invigilators in the Autumn term of the Summer series. Advance planning required to ensure enough are available for the sittings
- Head of Centre to be informed if recruitment necessary
- Administrative staff to receive up dated Exam Invigilator training to ensure back up is available in case of Invigilator absence

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

- Head of Centre is responsible for ensuring sufficient and appropriate rooms are available for exams
- The Exams Officer and Assistant Headteacher (Student Outcomes) will work to ensure sufficient suitable rooms are available

Cyber Attack

- Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of delivery
- The Exams Officer and Assistant Headteacher (Student Outcomes) will work to ensure sufficient suitable plan is in place

Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- MIS system failure at final entry deadline
- MIS system failure during exams preparation
- Power outage immediately prior to or during an on-screen test

- MIS system failure at results release time

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Exams Officer to ensure downloaded copies of entry information are available
- Exams Officer to ensure that entry information is kept to enable direct entry onto exam board website if necessary
- Exams Officer to download student results directly from exam board website

Emergency Evacuation of the Exam Room (or Centre Lock Down)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Whole centre evacuation (or lock down) during exam time due to serious incident resulting in exam candidates being unable to start, proceed with or complete their exams

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Evacuation procedures to be implemented
- Exams Officer to ensure all Invigilators are aware of the evacuation procedures
- Exams Officer to inform awarding bodies at the earliest convenience

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 centres to prepare students, as usual, for examinations.

- In the case of modular courses, centres may advise candidates to sit examinations in an alternative series
- Centres should have plans in place to facilitate alternative methods of learning)

Candidates Unable 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

- Head of Centre responsible for finding alternative venues/methods of learning
- Priority given to exam cohort
- Exams Officer to contact awarding bodies for advice and regarding special consideration
- Centre to communicate with parents and students

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Exams Officer to inform relevant awarding bodies at the earliest opportunity
- Open for candidates only if possible
- Use alternative venue, in agreement with awarding bodies
- Head of Centre/ Assistant Headteacher (Student Outcomes) responsible for finding alternative revenues/methods of learning

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

- Exams Officer to communicate with awarding bodies for approval of alternative delivery arrangements
- Awarding organisations to provide centres 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 organisations would provide guidance on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances. As a last resort, and in close collaboration with centres and regulators, awarding organisations 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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Exams Officer to communicate with awarding bodies for approval of alternative delivery arrangements
- All completed papers to be stored in the secure exams storage until arrangements can be made for their delivery to the awarding body

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

- Exams Officer /Head of Centre to communicate with awarding bodies immediately
- Exams Officer/Head of Centre to communicate with parents/carers of affected candidates
- Student marks to be submitted based on appropriate evidence
- Candidates offered the opportunity to retake in subsequent series

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

- Distribution of results: Centre to make arrangements to access its results at an alternative site, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation centre to make arrangements to make post results requests at an alternative location

Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

Ofqual

Ofqual guidance extract below taken directly from the Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland - **What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted** (updated 01 October 2020) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-if-exams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted>

What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted

Contingency planning

Awarding organisations are required to establish, maintain and comply with an up-to-date detailed written contingency plan, to mitigate any incident they have identified may occur. This includes having communication plans for external parties (Ofqual General Condition of Recognition A6). Schools and colleges should also be prepared for possible disruption to exams and assessments and make sure staff are aware of these plans.

General contingency guidance

- [Emergency planning and response](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [Handling strike action in schools](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [Opening and closing local-authority-maintained schools](#) from the Department for Education in England

- [Exceptional closure days](#) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- [Checklist - exceptional closure of schools](#) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- [School closures](#) from NI Direct
- [Opening schools in extremely bad weather](#) - guidance for schools from the Welsh Government
- [Policy Guidance from National Counter Terrorism Security Office and partners on preparing for threats](#)

Disruption to assessments or exams

In the absence of any instruction from the relevant awarding organisation, you should make sure that any exam 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 exam or assessment cannot take place*
- *a student misses an exam 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](#)

Steps you should take

Exam planning

Review contingency plans well in advance of each exam or assessment series. Consider how, if the contingency plan is invoked, you will comply with the awarding organisation's requirements.

In the event of disruption

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

After the exam

1. 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.
2. Advise students, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date.
3. Ensure that scripts are stored under secure conditions.
4. Return scripts to awarding organisations in line with their instructions. Never make alternative arrangements for the transportation of completed exam scripts, unless told to do so by the awarding organisation.

. Steps the awarding organisation should take

Exam planning

1. Establish and maintain, and at all times comply with, an up-to-date, written contingency plan.
2. 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.

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.

After the exam

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 exams could have been affected by the disruption.

If any students miss an exam 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](#)

7. 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.

Widespread national disruption to the taking of examinations / assessments

The governments' view across England, Wales and Northern Ireland is education in 2022 to 2023 has returned to normal. Schools are open and examinations will go ahead in summer 2023.

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 examinations and assessments, including exam timetables.

In November 2022, Ofqual and the Department for Education issued decisions following a consultation on the resilience of the qualifications sector for specific examinations awarded in England in summer 2023. Ofqual has published [Guidance for schools, colleges and other exam centres on gathering evidence of student performance for students entering GCSEs, AS and A levels, the Advanced Extension Award and Project qualifications to support resilience in the exam system in England in 2023](#).

The Department for Education has updated its guidance on handling strike action in schools in England in light of the industrial action in 2023. The guidance recommends schools should prioritise the running of examinations and assessments on any strike days, and should review their contingency plans to make this happen. Schools, colleges and other exam centres should speak to the relevant awarding organisations if they are expecting any disruption that might affect the sitting of exams and assessments.

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

JCQ

JCQ guidance above taken directly from **Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2021-2022** <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
- 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

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.

- *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.*
- *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.*
- *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.*
- *The awarding bodies will designate a 'contingency day' 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>*
- *The designation of a 'contingency day' 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 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.

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.

- (JCQ guidance above taken directly from Instructions for conducting examinations 2022-2023 <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 Preparing for disruption to examinations (Effective from 1 September 2022) www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/
- 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

- Opening and closing maintained schools www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools
- 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>

Wales

- School closures: examinations gov.wales/school-closures-examinations
- Opening schools in extremely bad weather: guidance for schools gov.wales/opening-schools-extremely-bad-weather-guidance-schools

Northern Ireland

- Exceptional closure days www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days
- Checklist for Principals when considering Opening or Closure of School
www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools

ProtectUK

- Checklist for managing bomb threats
www.gov.uk/government/publications/bomb-threats-guidance/procedures-for-handling-bomb-threats

National Cyber Security Centre

- 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 has been asking 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 Department is reminding centres to review the NCSC advice and to take precautions. This includes ensuring that you have backups in place for your key services and data.
- For ease of reference, the Department has highlighted key links relating to the NCSC cyber security guidance below:
 - More ransomware attacks on UK education - NCSC.GOV.UK
 - Ransomware advice and guidance for your IT teams to implement
 - Offline backups in an online world
 - Backing up your data
 - Practical resources to help improve your cyber security
 - Building Resilience: Ransomware and the risks to schools and ways to prevent it
 - School staff offered training to help shore up cyber defences - <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/>