



# **Exam Contingency Plan**

## Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exam process.

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 at Carrington School.

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 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 details how Carrington School complies with the JCQ's General Regulations for Approved Centres (section 5.3, Centre management) by having in place a written exam 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 be considered.

## Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

### 1. Exams officer absence at key points in the exam process (exam cycle)

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, room allocation; invigilation schedules not prepared
- Candidates not being 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 post-results services

*Centre actions to mitigate the impact of disruption listed above*

- Nominated members of SLT to cover a role/task with ongoing support from other SLT members
- Seek support and guidance from other exams officers within the trust
- Use resources from membership with The Exams Office
- MIS Exams module training undertaken by members of SLT

## 2. SENCo extended absence at key points in the exam process (exam cycle)

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 disruption listed above*

- Teaching assistants, exams officer and Learning Support Administrator to work with the Exams SLT line manager and SENCo SLT line manager to identify candidates where applications for access arrangements may be required.
- Seek support from other SENCos within the trust as appropriate
- The employment of outside agencies/professionals may be required

## 3. Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam process (exam cycle)

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 disruption listed above*

- Other subject staff to assume marking workload and prioritising of assessments for external award, directed by Head of Faculty
- Exams Officer to liaise with Heads of Faculty and/or SLT to ensure all necessary deadlines are adhered to. Where this is not possible, Exams Officer will liaise with the relevant Awarding Body and act upon advice received

#### 4. Invigilators – lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence

- 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 listed above*

- Exams Officer and HR & Cover Administrator will review the invigilation staffing at the start of each academic year to ensure sufficient staff are recruited and trained in a timely fashion
- Exams Officer and HR & Cover Administrator to be aware of trained Support Staff who will be available to invigilate at short notice
- The employment of outside agencies/professionals may be required during external exam seasons

#### 5. Exam rooms – lack of appropriate rooms or main venue(s) unavailable at short notice

- Unable to identify sufficient/appropriate rooms during exams timetable planning
- Insufficient rooms available on peak exam days
- Main exam venue unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time

*Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above*

- (Where main exam venue(s) unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time) where possible, make use of other available rooms within the centre, prioritising candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- Identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding body
- (Where main exam venue(s) unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time) where possible, move to alternative venue, prioritising candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- SLT will work with the Exams Officer to source an alternative venue

If alternative venue is required, Carrington School will:

- Communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or venue
- Communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue

The Head of Centre will email parents and carers and post on social media and the school website. Time allowing year group assemblies will take place to ensure all students are aware of changes and to explain the logistics and procedures. A letter detailing information regarding the changes will be distributed to students via assemblies or tutor groups.

- Ensure the secure transportation of question papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue
- After the exam, consider whether any candidate's ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

#### 6. Cyber-attack

- Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of delivery

*Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above*

Exams Officer will work with IT and contact the relevant awarding body to seek further guidance. Senior Leaders will monitor the situation and take any action required as directed by the awarding bodies.

## 7. Failure of IT systems

- MIS/IT system failure at final entry deadline
- MIS/IT system failure during exams preparation
- MIS/IT system failure at results release time

*Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above*

- The Exams Officer, in consultation with SLT, will make entries from another venue direct to Awarding Bodies.
- Results may also be accessed directly from the Awarding Body
- At all times during system failure, the Exams Officer will liaise with the Awarding Body to minimise disruption and costs incurred.
- SLT will support in conjunction with ICT technicians

## 8. Emergency evacuation of the exam room or centre lockdown

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

*Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above*

Carrington School will:

- Refer to and invoke its (exams) emergency evacuation policy/procedure in line with JCQ's 'Centre emergency evacuation procedure' (or its (exams) lockdown policy)
- Contact the relevant awarding body as soon as possible and follow its instructions
- Where accommodation is limited, prioritise candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- After the exam consider whether any candidate's ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

The Head of Centre will communicate information and solutions to parents, carers and candidates.

## 9. Disruption of teaching time in the weeks before an exam – centre closed for an extended period

- 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 listed above*

Carrington School will:

- Recognise it remains the responsibility of the centre to prepare students, as usual, for examinations
- Facilitate alternative methods of learning
- Communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) information relating to alternative methods of learning
- Take advice offered by the awarding body regarding alternative arrangements for conducting examinations that may be available
- Take advice offered by the awarding body on the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations
- Advise candidates, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date

The Head of Centre will email parents and carers and post on social media and the school website. Time allowing year group assemblies will take place to ensure all students are aware of changes and to explain the logistics and procedures. A letter detailing information regarding the changes will be distributed to students via assemblies or tutor groups.

## 10. Candidates at risk of being unable to take examinations – centre remains open

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

*Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above*

Carrington School will:

- Take advice offered by the awarding body on the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations
- Discuss alternative arrangements with the awarding body if a candidate misses an exam or loses their assessment due to an emergency, or other event, outside of the candidate's control
- Identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding body, ensuring the secure transportation of questions papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue
- Communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue
- Consider whether any candidates' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

The Head of Centre will email parents and carers and post on social media and the school website. Time allowing year group assemblies will take place to ensure all students are aware of changes and to explain the logistics and procedures. A letter detailing information regarding the changes will be distributed to students via assemblies or tutor groups.

## 11. Centre at risk of being 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)

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

*Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above*

Carrington School will:

- Take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether the centre is able to open
- Contact the relevant awarding body as soon as possible and follow its instructions
- Discuss alternative arrangements with the awarding body if the exam or assessment cannot take place
- Follow guidance provided by the awarding body on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances
- Where accommodation is limited, prioritise candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- Communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue
- Consider whether any candidates' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

The Head of Centre will email parents and carers and post on social media and the school website. Time allowing year group assemblies will take place to ensure all students are aware of changes and to explain the logistics and procedures. A letter detailing information regarding the changes will be distributed to students via assemblies or tutor groups.

## 12. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

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

*Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above*

Carrington School will:

- Liaise with awarding bodies regarding the provision of electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network and will ensure when copies are received/made these are stored under secure conditions
- Follow guidance provided by the awarding body on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances
- Understand that as a last resort, and in close collaboration with centres and regulators, awarding organisations will consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date
- Communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue

## 13. Disruption to transporting completed examination scripts

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

*Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above*

Carrington School will:

- Where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding bodies arrange collections, contact the relevant awarding bodies for advice and instructions and will 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, investigate alternative options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ publication 'Instructions for Conducting Examinations'
- Ensure the secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection

## 14. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

- 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 listed above*

Carrington School will:

- Liaise with the awarding body to determine if candidate marks for affected assessments may be able to be generated based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding body
- Where marks cannot be generated by awarding body, inform candidates they may need to retake the affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series

The Head of Centre will inform students, parents and carers by email.

## 15. Centre unable to distribute results as normal (including in the event of the centre being unavailable on results day owing to an unforeseen emergency) or facilitate post-results services

- 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 listed above*

Carrington School will:

- Make arrangements to coordinate access to post results services from an alternative venue
- Make arrangements to access its results at an alternative venue/share facilities with another centre if this is possible, in agreement with the relevant awarding body
- Contact the relevant awarding body if electronic post results requests are not possible
- Inform candidates of any alternative arrangements in place for the distribution of results and the facilitation of post-results services

SLT will work with the Exams Officer to source an alternative venue.

The Head of Centre will email parents and carers and post on social media and the school website. Time allowing year group assemblies will take place to ensure all students are aware of changes and to explain the logistics and procedures. A letter detailing information regarding the changes will be distributed to students via assemblies or tutor groups.

## Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning

### **JCQ guidance: Contingency planning**

The qualifications 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 2022. This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland

### **Ofqual guidance**

What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

### **Further guidance**

JCQ Joint Contingency Plan <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-walesand-northern-ireland>

General Regulations for Approved Centres [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations) Guidance notes on alternative site arrangements [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms)

Guidance notes for transferred candidates <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms>

Instructions for Conducting Examinations [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations](http://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-specialconsideration/regulations-and-guidance](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-specialconsideration/regulations-and-guidance)



## GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response: Exam disruption [www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings](https://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>

### 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:

- [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. Building Resilience: Ransomware and the risks to schools and ways to prevent it](#)
- [7. School staff offered training to help shore up cyber defences - NCSC.GOV.UK](#)