



Pendle Education Trust



Policy/Procedure/Guideline Review

Policy/Procedure/Guideline:

Exam contingency plan

Senior Manager Responsible:

Mrs Sarah Leak

Assistant Principal

Trust Approval:

Review date:

December 2025



Purpose

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the management and examination/administration of the exam process at Colne Primet Academy. This plan will be implemented in the event of major disruption to the system, such as absence of key personnel, widespread illness, travel disruption, bad weather, floods, fire, power failures or any other event which causes disruption. 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. As part of a small local Multi Academy Trust (Pendle Education Trust), some of our contingencies in place will make appropriate use of Trust resources, facilities and staff.

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by scenarios contained in the *Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* and the JCQ document **Preparing for disruption to examinations** (Effective from 1 September 2024). <https://www.jcq.org.uk/preparing-for-disruption-to-examinations/>

This plan complies with JCQ general regulations (section 5.3) that the centre has in place for inspection that must be reviewed and updated annually: in that:
The centre agrees to *“have in place a written contingency plan/examinations policy which covers all aspects of examination administration and delivery”*
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.

Contingency arrangements

In accordance with the regulations (GR 3.17-19), Colne Primet Academy **must** have an up to date written contingency plan.

The contingency plan **must** cover all aspects of examination/assessment administration and delivery. Senior leaders **must** have robust contingency arrangements in place that will minimise the risk to examination/assessment administration and delivery and any adverse impact on candidates.

The plan must cover the following scenarios:

- the head of centre, relevant senior leader(s) with oversight of examination and assessment administration, SENCo (or equivalent role), examinations officer or any other key staff essential to the examination process being absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle
- the potential impact of other events such as flooding which could lead to all or parts of the centre becoming unavailable
- potential issues with the centre’s IT systems

As part of the contingency plan the centre **must** identify an alternative site if examinations cannot be conducted at the registered address. Larger centres may require more than one potential alternative site or different sites for different Year Groups.



Colne Primet Academy **must** have at least one senior member of staff (senior designated contact) who is available to manage emergency requests from awarding bodies that are results related during the summer holidays. However, a number of contacts can be provided to reduce the risk of this falling on one individual throughout the summer holidays.

Colne Primet Academy **must** ensure that candidates' work is backed-up and should consider the contingency of candidates' work being backed-up on two separate devices, including one off-site back-up. Appropriate security arrangements must be implemented which protect candidates' work in the event of IT system corruption and cyber-attacks.

National Centre Number Register and other information requirements

In accordance with the regulations (GR 5.3), the head of centre will ensure that Colne Primet Academy responds to the National Centre Number Register annual update by the end of October every year which includes providing senior designated contact details (this might include a personal mobile number and/or email address). These must be the contact details of someone who can be reached in an emergency if the centre is closed over the summer and who can mobilise resources to respond to the issue.

Head of centre absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle

Where the head of centre may absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle, main duties and responsibilities will be escalated in accordance with the centre's written escalation process to the Assistant Principal responsible for examinations : [Exams escalation procedure](#)

Causes of potential disruption to the exam process :

1. Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle)
2. SENCo extended absence at key points in the exam cycle
3. Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle
4. Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence
5. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice
6. Failure of IT systems
7. Disruption of teaching time – centre closed for an extended period
8. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open
9. Centre unable to open as normal during the exams period
10. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers
11. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts
12. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked
13. Centre unable to distribute results as normal
14. *Cyber Attack*

Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning:

Ofqual
JCQ
GOV.UK



Causes of potential disruption to the exam process

1. Exam officer extended absence at a critical stage in the exam 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 and trained.

Entries:

- awarding bodies not being informed of early/estimated entries which prompts release of early information required by teaching staff.
- candidates not being entered with awarding bodies for external exams/assessment.
- awarding body entry deadlines missed or late or other penalty fees being incurred.

Pre-exams:

- exam timetabling, rooming allocation; and invigilation schedules not prepared
- candidates not briefed on exam timetables and awarding body information for candidates
- 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
- e.g. very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration
- candidates' scripts not dispatched as required to awarding bodies

Results and post-results:

- access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates
- the facilitation of the post-results services

Centre actions:

- **Assistant Principal (Curriculum/Teaching) to assume responsibility for the above tasks, with the support of other members of SLT and drawing on support from the Admin Team.**
- **Exams Officer support to be sought from West Craven High School, within Pendle Education Trust, as appropriate.**

2. SENCO extended absence at a critical stage 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
- 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
- modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline
- staff providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained

Exam time

- access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam room

Centre Actions:

- **Principal will assume responsibility with the support of the Exams Officer and Teaching Assistants.**
- **SENCO support to be sought from West Craven High School – the other secondary school within Pendle Education Trust.**
- **The employment of outside agencies / professionals may be required.**

3. 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*

Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet submission deadlines

Centre actions:

- **SLT to work with Heads of Curriculum to reorganise teaching timetables so subject specialists can be redeployed to classes affected where appropriate.**
- **Other subject staff to assume marking workload, particularly in relation to controlled assessments, mock exams and other key assessments.**
- **The Exams Officer to liaise with the Head of Curriculum and/or SLT to ensure all necessary deadlines are adhered to, drawing on support from other staff across the Trust where appropriate.**
- **The Exams Officer will liaise with the relevant Awarding Body where necessary and act upon advice received.**

4. 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:

- The Exams Officer will review invigilation staffing at the start of each academic year to ensure sufficient staff are recruited and trained.
- Staff who have worked as invigilators in other centres will be retrained
- The Exams Officer will be aware of school staff available for invigilation duties at short notice and for peak exam days.
- Non teaching staff in the academy will be invigilator trained to ensure sufficient coverage of exam invigilators at all times
- Collaboration across the Trust to ensure surplus invigilators can be used if necessary.

5. 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:

The Exams Officer will organise rooming for examinations well in advance and liaise as appropriate with Estate staff. This will ensure sufficient rooming is available and the rooms are appropriate.

- In the event of the Sports Hall being unavailable and sufficient time is available, the main Hall and/or gym can be used as an alternative venue.
- In the event of a room not being available at very short notice, sufficient staff will be made available to ensure the security of the examination is not compromised whilst alternative rooming is sourced. SLT will work with the Exams Officer in the case of all such emergencies.
- Links have been made with the local Primary School, Primet Primary School; and also the local church with a hall across the road. The site team will support moving tables and chairs in the event of an off site contingency being needed. The Primary school backs onto the Secondary school's grounds so is accessible by foot.

6. Cyber attack

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of delivery

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- (This will include the required arrangements for cyber security)
(GR 3.21) Ensure there are procedures in place to maintain the security of user accounts by:
 - h) providing training for authorised staff on the importance of creating strong unique passwords and keeping all account details secret



- h) providing training for staff on awareness of all types of social engineering/ phishing attempts
- h) enabling additional security settings wherever possible
- h) updating any passwords that may have been exposed
- h) setting up secure account recovery options
- h) reviewing and managing connected applications
- h) monitoring accounts and regularly reviewing account access, including removing access when no longer required
- h) ensuring authorised members of staff securely access awarding bodies' online systems in line with awarding body regulations regarding cyber security and the JCQ document *Guidance for centres on cyber security*
 Authorised staff will have access, where necessary, to a device which complies with awarding bodies' multi-factor authentication (MFA) requirements, reporting any actual or suspected compromise of an awarding body's online systems immediately to the relevant awarding body

7. Failure of ICT systems:

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

IT system corruption affecting candidates' work

MIS system failure at final entry deadline

MIS system failure during exams preparation

MIS system failure at results release time

Centre actions:

- **At all times during a system failure the Exams Officer will liaise with the Awarding Body to minimise disruption and costs. All advice given will be adhered to.**
- **Where possible, entries will be made from another venue to the Awarding Bodies. This may involve drawing on other resources and venues within the Trust.**
- **On results day, results may be accessed directly from the Awarding Body**
- **Security arrangements put in place which protects candidates work**

8. Disruption of teaching time – 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:

- **Centre to communicate with parents, carers and students about the disruption to teaching time using the school website and/or text messaging for communication.**
- **Work to be set and made available to students making use of Class Charts**
- **Alternative venues, as appropriate, will be sought including use of other facilities across the Trust.**

9. 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 because of a crisis

Centre actions:

- Centre will communicate with relevant awarding organisation to make them aware of the issue and discuss alternative arrangements / special consideration and take appropriate action following this advice.
- Centre will then communicate solutions to parents/carers and candidates.

10. Centre unable to open as normal during the exams period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Centre unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations.

Centre actions:

- Centre to inform awarding organisation of examinations to be affected.
- Look where possible to provide alternative provision e.g. through facilities at other venues across the Trust. In the first instance we will look at the possibility of joining exams already scheduled at West Craven High School. For exams where the exam facilities at West Craven are fully used we will approach a local Primary school – Primet Primary school (within walking distance) or the three primary schools in the Trust – Pendle Primary Academy, Casterton Primary Academy and Castercliff Primary Academy to use the exam facilities they use during SATs examinations and/or Nelson & Colne College facilities.

11. 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:

- 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

12. Delay in collection arrangements for **completed examination scripts**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts.

Centre actions:



- The Exams Officer will contact the Awarding Body to notify them of any such difficulties, seek advice where appropriate and put suitable alternative arrangements in place.
- All scripts to be securely stored until these arrangements are in place.

13. 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.

Centre actions:

- Immediate communication to be made with relevant Awarding Body to notify them of any such incidents and act upon advice given.
- Students, parents and carers to be informed by letter.

14. Centre unable to distribute results as normal

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:

- Exams Officer / SLT to contact awarding bodies and discuss alternative means of distribution. Appropriate use of other Trust facilities.

15. Emergency evacuation of the exam room or centre lockdown

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning

Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges

[Cyber Security Standards for schools and colleges](#)

[Cyber crime and cyber security: a guide for education providers](#)

[DfE Cyber Security Guidance – March 2023](#)

Ofqual

Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/joint-contingency-plan-in-the-event-of-widespread-disruption-to-the-examination-system-in-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

JCQ Joint Contingency Plan www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents

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



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

Guidance for centres on cyber security (Effective from November 2023) www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/

Information for centres affected by RAAC – the delivery of non-examination assessments and the special consideration process www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/non-examination-assessments/

GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response: Exam and assessment disruption
www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings

Dispatch of exam scripts guide: Ensuring the service runs smoothly; Contingency planning
www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service

