



# *Upper Wharfedale School*

*Headteacher: Mr A Taylor  
Associate Headteacher: Miss S Sumner*

# **Exam contingency plan 2016 - 2017**

This plan is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

<b>Approved/reviewed by</b>	
Mrs R Hayton – Exams Officer	
<b>Date of next review</b>	September 2017

## Contents

Purpose of the plan .....	3
Causes of potential disruption to the exam process.....	3
1. Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle).....	3
2. SENCo extended absence at key points in the exam cycle .....	4
3. Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle .....	4
4. Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence.....	5
5. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice .....	5
6. Failure of IT systems .....	6
7. Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down).....	6
8. Disruption of teaching time – centre closed for an extended period .....	8
9. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open .....	8
10. Centre unable to conduct exams because of a power outage – centre remains open .....	9
11. Centre unable to open as normal during the exams period .....	9
12. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers .....	10
13. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts.....	10
14. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked .....	11
15. Centre unable to distribute results as normal .....	11
Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning .....	12
GOV.UK .....	12
Ofqual.....	12
JCQ.....	12

## Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at the centre. 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 scenarios contained in the *Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*.

*“It is the responsibility of the head of centre to ensure that his/her centre... has in place a written examination contingency plan/examinations policy which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to have a robust contingency plan in place, minimising risk to examination administration, should the examinations officer be absent at a crucial stage of the examination cycle.*

*(The examination contingency plan/examinations policy should also reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency.)*

[JCQ [General regulations for approved centres](#)5.3]

## Causes of potential disruption to the exam process

### 1. Exam 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*
- *Entries*
- *Pre-exams*
- *Exam time*
- *Results and post-results*

#### Centre actions

##### **General**

The Exams Officer maintains a week by week schedule of tasks that need to be done in the Exams Diary. This can be accessed by the Head of Centre or Head of School at any time. The Exams Officer keeps relevant SIMS manuals that might be required at any time throughout the year. These can be accessed by the Head of Centre or Head of School at any time.

##### **Making Entries**

The Head of Centre and Head of School have access to the SIMS Exams Organiser software in order to make entries. Subject leaders and Heads of Faculty will be asked to check entries in good time of entry deadlines.

##### **Coursework**

Where applicable the subject leader is aware of the deadline and the data that has to be submitted. The Head of Centre will submit coursework marks and check that coursework samples are sent by subject leaders by the required dates.

##### **Exam Period**

In case of absence, the Examinations Officer will inform the Head of Centre in good time so that the smooth running of examinations can be ensured. A folder will be made up during each exam period detailing which exams are taking

place and when with seating plans, access arrangements information, rooms, candidate lists, attendance registers and invigilator lists and can be found in the exams office clearly labelled.

### **Exam Papers**

The Examinations Officer and Head of Centre have access to the keys to the secure exam storage cupboard. Exam papers are set out in the secure storage cupboards in date order so that the following day's exam papers are always easily found. Exam packets may need to be opened and re-packed if an exam is taking place in more than one room. This must be witnessed by a 2<sup>nd</sup> person to check that the correct envelope is being opened – check JCQ guidelines for how far in advance of the exam this may be done.

### **Script despatch**

Scripts must be packed and either taken to reception for collection in the afternoon or locked up in the exams storage room in the secure cupboards (if it is too late for that day's collection). Parcelforce collect scripts between 12.30 pm and 4.00 pm

The attendance registers/seating plans/access documents are stored on the shelves in the exams office in labelled folders – these must be ticked and signed. One copy goes into the envelope with the scripts. Envelopes are stored in the exams office in the top cupboards.

A yellow label must be stuck on the envelope – this will be in the file marked "Examiner Address Labels". A Parcelforce despatch sheet must be completed - these will be in the file marked "Exam Despatch Log".

### **Results**

The Head of Centre will access results using the manuals in the exams office.

## **2. SENCo 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*
- *Pre-exams*
- *Exam time*

### Centre actions

The Exams Officer will closely monitor the access arrangement process in the event of the SENCo having an extended absence. The Inclusion Co-ordinator will liaise with the Head of Centre and centre staff regarding the identification and approval of access arrangements and collation of evidence. Specialist advice will be sought from outside agencies if the need arises.

## **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*

- *Non-examination assessment tasks not set/issued/taken by candidates as scheduled*
- *Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet awarding body submission deadlines*

#### Centre actions

The Exams Officer will closely monitor the key tasks undertaken by teaching staff and will liaise with the Head of Centre and other centre staff regarding entry information. The Head of Centre and Head of School will monitor the progress of non-examination tasks, coursework marks and internal assessment marks and ensure steps are put in place to complete these. Awarding bodies will be informed of any potential issues as soon as possible.

#### **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

In the unforeseen event of the centre is unable to recruit and train sufficient invigilators, support staff within school will be trained and released to conduct exams

Invigilators are given their timetables in advance and should all report to the exams office on arrival. The folder will detail where they are meant to be and with which candidates. Invigilators' hours are organised by the Exams Officer. If an invigilator does not turn up for any reason a member of SLT will stand in for them.

#### **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

If the exams officer is unable to identify sufficient/appropriate rooms during the planning period, timetable changes will be made to ensure that appropriate rooming is in place. This is also the case on peak exam days.

If there is an unexpected incident at exam time preventing the use of a room, the Head of Centre will liaise with other local schools to accommodate the exam – Settle College, South Craven, Skipton Academy and Craven College. Special consideration will be applied for and the students kept secure for the duration of the delay.

## 6. Failure of IT systems

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

*MIS system failure at final entry deadline*

*MIS system failure during exams preparation*

*MIS system failure at results release time*

### Centre actions

In the event of a MIS system failure at crucial times during the exam cycle the ICT Manager will be informed as soon as possible and every step will be taken to reinstate the MIS to working condition. Exam boards will be notified in good time and steps will be taken to continue proceedings using manual systems.

## 7. 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

If the fire alarm sounds the exams officer will immediately enter the main exam room (Hall) and note the time of the alarm. The head of centre will liaise with the exams officer regarding the necessity for stopping the exam and evacuating the building. If the need arises for an evacuation, the normal school Fire Evacuation Procedures for examinations will apply:

#### **A) THE SCHOOL HALL**

- (1) Candidates will stop writing, place their papers face down on the desk.
- (2) The Exams Officer will remind the candidates of the need to remain in silence and not communicate with any other candidate.
- (3) Candidates will evacuate the room one row at a time via the fire exit door from the hall. They will take their desk labels with them for identification purposes.
- (4) One invigilator will go with the first group of students and the second (if available) will go with the second group of students. The first invigilator will take the internal attendance register with him/her.
- (5) The Exams Officer will be the last to leave the room, having secured the evacuation of all candidates and the room.
- (6) Candidates will proceed to the tennis courts and line up in exam room order, leaving adequate space between rows and columns to maintain the security of the exam.
- (7) The first invigilator will take the register (with the aid of the desk labels for identification) and remind candidates not to communicate with the rest of the school who will be lined up in the bus turning circle next to the tennis courts.
- (8) The Exams Officer will report to the Head of Centre when all students are accounted for

#### **Returning to the Exam Room:**

- (9) Candidates will return to the exam room in reverse order. The Exams Officer will go with the first group of students and the second invigilator (if available) will go with the second group and the first invigilator with the last group of candidates.
- (10) In assessing whether or not to continue the exam the Exams Officer will liaise with the Head of Centre (or his/her nominated deputy) as to whether or not the session will continue. The Head of Centre (or his/her nominated deputy) will take the following factors into consideration:

- The length of time that has passed since the official start time
- Whether the minimum time for remaining the examination has passed to maintain the integrity of the exam.
- The amount of time left to complete the exam(s)
- Whether there is sufficient time to complete the exam before another session starts.
- Whether continuing the exam will take candidates over the session limit of 3 hours, taking particular care to consider candidates with access arrangements which include extra time.

If the Head of Centre (or his/her nominated deputy) are satisfied that the above conditions have not been breached he/she will ask the Exams Officer to continue the exam.

- (11) The Exams Officer will ask all candidates to mark their work with an Asterisk (star) so that the exam board can identify where the candidates' concentration was disturbed.
- (12) The candidates will continue with the exam and be given the full allocated amount of time (including stoppage) for the completion of the exam.
- (13) Scripts will be submitted to the exam board in the usual manner at the end of the exam.
- (14) The Exams Officer will apply for special consideration for all affected candidates.
- (15) If the above conditions cannot be met the Exams Officer will liaise with the Head of Centre regarding a decision to abandon the session.

**If the session is to be abandoned, this will be either:**

- Because of consideration of the criteria above,
- Because re-entry to the premises cannot be secured
- Because the risk of communication between candidates, the validation of the exam cannot be guaranteed

- (16) The Exams Officer will contact the Exam Board at the first opportunity and then apply for Special Consideration of all affected candidates.
- (17) Partially completed papers will be sent to the exam board by the usual means if requested.

**If Evacuation is unnecessary:**

The Exams Officer will apply procedures (11) – (15) above providing the conditions in (10) above can be guaranteed.

## **B) ALL OTHER EXAM ROOMS IN USE AT THE SAME TIME AS THE HALL**

- (18) The Invigilator in charge of the room will follow procedures (1) – (7) above, immediately evacuating the room and accompanying the candidates to the tennis courts.
- (19) The Invigilator will wait for further instruction from the Exams Officer who will communicate with the Invigilator at the earliest opportunity.
- (20) The Exams Officer will apply procedures (8) and (10) – (17) above.

## **C) EXAMS TAKING PLACE IN OTHER EXAM ROOMS WHEN THE HALL IS NOT IN USE (including on-line exams in the ICT Room)**

Procedures (1) – (14) above will apply, providing the conditions in (10) above can be guaranteed.

If the lock down bell sounds, the full policy will be adhered to and students will be kept in the exam hall or room, away from doors and windows. A note of the time will be taken and the exam board will be notified as soon as it is safe to do so.

## 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 closed interrupting the of normal teaching and learning

*The centre to communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this. [Joint Contingency Plan (JCP) scenario 1]*

### Centre actions

If the centre is closed for an extended period interrupting the normal teaching and learning of candidates, the centre will communicate the details to parents, carers and students and the Local Authority. Arrangements will be made for students to be taught at an alternative school or site.

## 9. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

Candidates do not turn up for an exam

Candidates turn up for an exam that they are not entered for

Candidates are entered for the wrong paper

Candidates are taken ill during an exam

Awarding Body communications systems fail – online exams

*The centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue. The centre to communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issue. [JCP scenario 2]*

### Centre actions

#### **Students do not turn up for exam**

Message to Reception to ring home. Students can be admitted into the exams room up to 1 hour after published start of exam when the exam is over 1 hr duration. If they cannot attend the exam students can be given the opportunity to sit the exam at the next available series and/or special consideration can be applied if the adverse circumstances are beyond their control and if the student has met the minimum requirements.

#### **Students turn up who are not entered**

Check with Subject leader/SMO. Find a paper, seat them, amend attendance list and make entry. Charge late fee to department. If recurring problem see SLT.

#### **Students are entered for the wrong paper**

Subject leader contacted to confirm error. Contact Awarding Body for copy of paper if necessary. Provide exam paper, seat and amend entry.

#### **Student taken ill during exam**

Invigilator ring reception/on-call to contact first aider. Special Consideration for student(s)

#### **Awarding Body communications systems fail – on line exams**

Contact awarding body immediately



## 10. Centre unable to conduct exams because of a power outage – centre remains open

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

Candidates are unable to site their exam due to a power outage in the exam room

### Centre actions

Site Manager and ICT Manager informed as soon as possible. Re-room the exam to rooms with power if possible. Start the exam late within JCQ regulations if power is restored. Special consideration to be applied for only if external examinations cannot be taken, and it is the final exam opportunity for the students concerned before cash-in. To be completed within 7 days of exam date.

## 11. 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 (including *centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency*)

*A centre which is unable to open as normal for examinations must inform each awarding organisation with which examinations are due to be taken as soon as is possible.[JCP scenario 5]*

### Centre actions

If there are timetabled examinations scheduled on a day when the Head Teacher decides that the school should be closed to staff and students, the following procedures will be implemented:

The school has a team of staff who, should conditions allow, are able to come to school to ensure that timetabled exams may go ahead. In such an eventuality, the school as an examination centre will only open to candidates sitting timetabled GCSE written examinations. In order that the school can ensure the correct administration of exams, the team has to include the Exams Officer or a suitably trained member of leadership team. If these members of staff are not able to get into school the scheduled exam(s) will not run. In line with JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) guidance, the school will endeavour to be open and, where conditions allow, timetabled examinations will go ahead. If the start of the exam is delayed candidates will be isolated and the exam board will be notified. Special consideration may be applied.

Advice and recommendations from the JCQ state:

*“Wherever possible, the examinations should be conducted according to the centre’s published examination timetable” and “it is important to note that rescheduling the examinations is not an option due to the consequences that it would have across the system”*

In the event that weather is adverse and the school is closed on a day of a scheduled public examination the Head Teacher will assess the possibility of key staff being able to attend. If he is confident that key staff are able to be in attendance and that the exam will run. The school website will be updated to show timetabled examinations are still going ahead and advising of any revised start times. Start times may be delayed for morning exams if a number of candidates are late (permission will be sought from relevant awarding bodies). All candidates are expected to make the effort to come in and sit their examination. The decisions regarding travelling to school for an exam rest with individual families taking consideration of the weather and road conditions locally to them. If a candidate is unable to get into school on an exam day as a result of inclement weather, it is imperative that families contact the school as soon as possible to explain that this has occurred. If the head teacher were to take a decision that the school has to close, as it is unsafe to open, we would notify the exam board that we had been unable to run the exams that were scheduled for that day.

If the school has to be closed for a prolonged period of time which may affect more than one examination, students may need to sit the exam at an alternative venue. The agreed venue for this is Settle College. Transport for students

will be arranged as soon as possible, along with necessary other arrangements such as exam desks and secure transportation of papers.

In the event of the centre having to partially close they will:

- consider opening school for examinations and examination candidates only
- use alternative venues in agreement with relevant awarding organisations (e.g. share facilities with other centres or use other public buildings if possible)
- apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements
- offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series, if possible

## 12. 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

*The centre to communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery of papers. [JCP scenario 3]*

### Centre actions

The centre will contact the awarding organisation to:

- source alternative couriers for delivery of hard copies
- provide centres with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network
- fax examination papers to centres if electronic transfer is not possible

The examinations officer would ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions

## 13. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

*The centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to resolve the issue. [JCP scenario 4]*

The centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to resolve the issue

The centre will, in the first instance, seek advice from awarding organisations and their normal collection agency regarding collection

The centre will not make their own arrangements for transportation without approval from awarding organisations

The centre will ensure secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection

#### 14. 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

*It is the responsibility of the head of centre to communicate this immediately to the relevant awarding organisation(s) and subsequently to students and their parents or carers. [JCP scenario 6]*

##### Centre actions

If possible, the candidate will retake the assessment that has been affected at a subsequent assessment window

The awarding organisations can be asked to generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement, as defined by the awarding organisations in consultation with the regulators

It is the responsibility of the head of centre to communicate this immediately to the relevant awarding organisation(s) and subsequently to students and their parents or carers

#### 15. 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

*Centres to contact awarding organisations about alternative options. [JCP scenario 11]*

##### Centre actions

The centre will make every effort to make arrangements to access results at an alternative site and/or share facilities with other schools and colleges if possible

The centre will also contact the awarding organisations about alternative options

**Causes 8-14** – all scenarios, criteria and specific communications have been taken directly from the *Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*.

## Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning

### GOV.UK

*Emergency planning and response* Severe weather Exam disruption

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings>

*Teaching time lost due to severe weather conditions*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-time-lost-due-to-severe-weather-conditions>

*Dispatch of exam scripts: yellow label service*

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>

Statutory guidance on school closures

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools>

### 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

*General regulations for approved centres* <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations>

*Guidance on alternative site arrangements* <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/forms>

*Instructions for conducting examinations*

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>

*A guide to the special consideration process*

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance>

#### Contingency planning

The qualifications regulators, awarding bodies and government departments responsible for education have prepared and agreed a Joint contingency plan for the examinations system in case of wide scale disruption as a result of a flu pandemic, adverse weather conditions or other event.

The joint contingency plan is designed to 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 Joint contingency plan for the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland may be downloaded from the Ofqual website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-englandwales-and-northern-ireland>

[Taken directly from JCQ *Instructions for conducting examinations* <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>, page iii]