



Exam Contingency Plan

2023/24

This plan is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations:

Approved/reviewed by	
Justine Hardie/ Ollie Yeats	
Date of next review	October 2024

Key staff involved in contingency planning

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	Justine Hardie
Exams officer line manager (Senior leader)	Sally Woodley
Exams officer	Sharon Gatrell
ALS lead/SENCo	Ollie Yeats
Senior leader(s)	Ollie Yeats
	Lorna Green

Contents

Key staff involved in contingency planning	2
Contents	3
Purpose of the plan.....	3
Possible causes of disruption to the exam process	4
1. Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle).....	4
1.1 HOC extended absence at critical stages of the exam cycle.....	4
2. ALS lead/SENCo extended absence at key points in the exam cycle	6
3. Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle	6
4. Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence	7
5. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice	7
6. Failure of IT systems	7
7. Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down)	8
8. Disruption of teaching time in the weeks before an exam – 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 open as normal during the examination period	9
11. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers	9
12. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts	9
13. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked	9
14. Centre unable to distribute results as normal or facilitate post results services	9
Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning	11
Ofqual	11
JCQ	12
GOV.UK	13
Wales	14
Northern Ireland	14
National Counter Terrorism Security Office	14

Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at King Solomon 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 King Solomon 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

Possible causes of 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

- 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

- Everything is centralised on all senior staff to access.
- Ollie Yeats to cover the role. He is aware of procedures.
- Consideration should be given to work shadowing.
- All procedures should be documented.

1.1 HOC extended absence at critical stages of the exam cycle

Where the Head of Centre is 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. Ollie Yeats (Deputy Headteacher) will step in and act as Headteacher.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Request Assistant Headteachers support during this period of time.
- Consideration would be given to work shadowing.
- All procedures to be documented.

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

- 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

- Request Assistant Headteacher (Lorna Green) to take over
- Assistant Headteacher (Lorna Green), Exams Officer to work with SLT to identify students where applications for access arrangements may be required.
- Assistant Headteacher (Lorna Green), to liaise with Exams Officer to identify any shortfall in invigilation requirements and that gaps are filled.

2. 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

- SLT to ensure deputy head of department covers tasks
- SLT line manager/deputy HOD to provide Examinations Officer with details of estimated entries/final entries.

3. 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

- The Exams Officer will review the invigilation staffing at the start of each academic year to ensure sufficient staff are recruited and trained in a timely fashion.
- The Exams Officer will be aware of the school staff available for invigilation duties at short notice and for peak exam days.

4. 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

- The Exams Officer will organise rooming for examinations during the Spring Term ensuring sufficient time is available to identify appropriate rooms and plan appropriately.
- 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. The SLT will work with the Exams Officer at all times during such emergencies.

5. Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Cyber-attack that may compromise any aspect of delivery or results
MIS system failure at final entry deadline
MIS system failure during exams preparation

MIS system failure at results release time

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The Exams Officer, in consultation with the SLT, will make entries from another venue direct to the Awarding Bodies. Results may also be accessed directly from the AB. At all times during the system failure the Exams Officer will liaise with the AB to minimise disruption and costs incurred.
- IT Support Team to be on standby.
- Constant review of risks and weak points in security measures.
- Staff training on data security and cyber threats

6. 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 •
See emergency policy for actions.

7. 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

- In the case of modular courses, centres may advise candidates to sit examinations in an alternative series. We have a network of Reach South schools.
- Centres should have plans in place to facilitate alternative methods of learning. We have a full Remote Learning Policy where learning can take place on Microsoft Teams.
- SLT to manage all such incidents: the centre to have a contingency plan in place to facilitate alternative methods of learning/venues.

8. 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

- The Exams Officer will contact the relevant EB to discuss alternative arrangements and liaise with the SLT to take appropriate action.
- Offer candidate an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series
- Apply to Ebs for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements.

9. 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

- The Exams Officer will contact the relevant EB to discuss alternative arrangements and liaise with the SLT to take appropriate action.
- Use alternative venue in agreement with the relevant EB – initial conversations should take place with schools within the trust and other local schools. Liaise with Head of Malmesbury Park & Hillview .
- Apply to relevant EBs for special consideration.

10. 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

- Follow Exam Board instructions. Exams Officer to liaise between Exam Board and SLT.

11. 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

- The Exams Officer will contact the EB to notify them of any such difficulties and put in place suitable alternative arrangements.
- Centre to ensure secure storage of completed examinations papers until collection.

12. 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

- Head of Centre to communicate this immediately to the relevant awarding body and subsequently to students and their parents/carers.

13. 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

- The Exams Officer will contact the EB to notify them of any such incidents and act upon advice given
- Centre to make arrangements to access its results at an alternative site.
- Results are also shared electronically with candidates.

Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

Ofqual

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

1. Contingency planning

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

When drafting contingency plans, you should consider the following guidance:

1.1 Covid specific guidance:

- [Guidance for schools Covid-19](#) from the Department for Education in England (subject to frequent updates as the situation changes)
- [Responsibility for autumn GCSE, AS and A level exam series](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [Action for FE Colleges](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [Public health guidance to support autumn exams](#) from the Department for Education
- [Education and childcare: coronavirus](#) from Welsh Government

1.2 General contingency guidance

- [Emergency planning and response](#) 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
- [Procedures for handling bomb threats](#) from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office.

2. 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](#)

3. Steps you should take

3.1 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.

3.2 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.

3.3 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.

4. Steps the awarding organisation should take

4.1 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.

4.2 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.

4.3 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.

5. 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](#)

6. 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.

JCQ

15.1 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.

Further information may be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency><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>

15.2 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.

15.3 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.

15.4 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.

15.5 The awarding bodies will designate a 'contingency day' for examinations, summer 2024. 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 2024, 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 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 this contingency arrangement so that they may take it 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** 2023-2024
<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-specialconsideration/regulations-and-guidance

GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response: Severe weather; Exam disruption; Coronavirus (COVID-19)
www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings

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>

National Counter Terrorism Security Office

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