



Examination Contingency Plan

Everyone Matters

We expect our community to be polite and respectful

Everyone Helps

We expect our community to make sensible choices

Everyone Succeeds

We expect our community to work hard

Guidance Owner	Exams Officer and Vice Principal
Scope of the Policy	Rainford High
Written/last reviewed	December 2021
Next review due	December 2022
Summary of key changes	COVID 19 section included

Aims of the contingency plan

- The Examination Contingency Plan is designed to ensure a consistent and effective response in the event of major disruption to the exam system at Rainford High affecting candidates across several awarding organisations.
- All awarding organisations are required to have their own well-established contingency plans in place to respond to such disruptions. This Examinations Contingency Plan takes into account these processes and procedures and is designed to complement them, not replace them. This also applies to all other qualifications at Rainford High School. This plan may also be used in conjunction with the Critical Incident Policy.
- The plan will be implemented in the event of major disruption to the system, such as widespread illness, travel disruption, bad weather or power failures. Any actions taken will be subject to the advice of the official agencies dealing with the specific circumstances being faced, for example the police, Environment Agency or Health Protection Agency.
- Implementing the plan will safeguard the interests of candidates while maintaining the integrity of the examination system and safeguarding qualification standards.
- The contingencies covered have been implemented on several occasions in response to localised issues in other centres. They would be applied on a larger scale in response to any widespread disruption at a national level.

The priority when implementing contingencies will be to maintain three principles:

- Delivering assessments to published timetables
- Delivering results to published timetables
- Complying with regulatory requirements in relation to assessment, marking and standards.

If the usual contingencies are no longer sufficient to maintain these outcomes, the Senior Leadership Team will agree the additional actions required.

Communications

In the event of local disruption communication to teachers and students will take place through the Exams Officer following agreement with the Principal.

In the event of major disruption, details of specific contingencies agreed across organisations involved in the examinations process will be confirmed on the Ofqual website and proactively communicated to relevant stakeholders.

This includes communication between the organisations involved in the response and communications to stakeholders such as centres, candidates, parents or carers and the public.

The organisations involved in this Joint Contingency Plan are committed to:

- Sharing timely and accurate information as required to meet the aims of the plan
- Communicating with stakeholders so they are aware of disruption to the exams, the contingency measures being implemented and any actions required of them as a result
- Ensuring any messages to the public are clear and accurate.

Disruption of the teaching time-School closed for an extended period

If Rainford High is 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. It is the responsibility of the school to prepare students, as usual, for examinations. The school should plan to facilitate teaching and learning by an alternative method or alternative location.

Guidance on emergency planning, with advice on severe weather, is available on the Department for Education website:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/emergencyplanning/a0069425/advice-on-severe-weather>

Disruption to the distribution of examination papers

If the distribution of examination papers to centres in advance of Examinations is disrupted:

- The awarding organisations to source alternative couriers for delivery of hard copies
- The awarding organisations would provide the school with electronic access to

examination papers via a secure external network. Awarding organisations would fax Examination papers to centres if electronic transfer is not possible. The examinations officer must ensure that all copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions.

Candidates unable to take examinations because of crisis-Centres remain open

If candidates are unable to attend examination to take examinations as normal. This contingency applies if Rainford High becomes closed due to extreme issues on the school site e.g. fire:

- The school can liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with the relevant awarding organisations. JCQ guidance on alternative site arrangements can be accessed through the JCQ website. Possibilities include the Civic Hall, Local Parish Halls or a Marquee.
- The school can offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series.

The school can apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements. Candidates are only eligible for special consideration if they have been fully prepared and have covered the whole course but are affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control. JCQ guidance on special consideration can be accessed through the JCQ website:

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

Centres are unable to open as normal during the examination period

If Rainford High is unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations it must inform each awarding organisation with which examinations are due to be taken as soon as is possible. The responsibility for deciding whether it is safe for the school to

open lies with the Head of centre. The Principal is responsible for taking advice, or following instructions from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether they are able to open:

- The school should open for examinations and examination candidates only if it is possible.
- The school should use alternative venues in agreement with relevant awarding organisations (e.g. share facilities with other centres or use other public building, if possible). Possibilities include the Civic Hall, Local Parish Halls or a Marquee.
- The school may offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series
- The school can apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements (see item 3).

Disruption to the transportation of the completed examination scripts

If there is a delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts:

- The school will seek advice from awarding organisations and normal collection agency regarding collection. The school must not make arrangements for transportation without approval from awarding organisations.
- The school must ensure secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection.

Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

If due to large scale damage to, or destruction of, completed examination scripts/assessment evidence before it can be marked:

- The awarding organisations should 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.
- The candidates should retake affected assessment at subsequent assessment window.

Disruption to the scanning process-Where completed examination scripts are being scanned in preparation for onscreen marking

If the examination boards scanning process is disrupted, resulting in a risk to the delivery of results by scheduled dates:

- The awarding organisations should implement their existing contingency plans for disruption to onscreen marking process
- The awarding organisations should revert to traditional form of marking
- The awarding organisations should recruit, train or re-standardise qualified new markers.

Markers unable to mark examination scripts according to marking schedules

If the examination board markers are unable to mark examination scripts resulting in a risk to the delivery of results by scheduled dates:

- The awarding organisations should re-allocate scripts to available markers

- The awarding organisations to recruit train or re-standardise qualified new markers and prioritisation of marking to be based on results dates.

Difficulty in meeting planned schedule or unable to issue results

Inability of awarding organisations (including the case of a single awarding organisation) to either meet planned schedule for issue of results, or to issue results as planned due to a systems failure. If the awarding organisation(s) face delay in meeting the planned schedule for issuing results:

- The awarding body should establish priorities for processing results; implement existing contingency plans for disruption to the schedule for issuing results.
- If awarding organisation(s) face difficulty in issuing results as planned due to a systems failure: in consultation with regulators, assess the level of disruption and consider alternative options for issuing results dependent upon the nature of the particular systems failure, the awarding organisations and regulators to liaise with relevant organisations (i.e. UCAS, CAO) regarding process of candidate progression to further and higher education.

Awarding organisations unable to issue accurate results

Due to system error/failure or attack on systems means significant numbers of results cannot be validated as accurate or are issued and found to be inaccurate:

- The candidates, school and stakeholders will be informed of any incorrect results
- The awarding organisations will re-validation results
- The awarding organisations to re-issue results, via alternative format if necessary.

Centres are unable to distribute results as normal

If the school is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates, or to facilitate a postal results services, the school should contact the awarding organisations about alternative options:

- The school will make arrangements to access its results at an alternative site.
- The school will make arrangements to coordinate access to post result services from an alternative site.
- The school will share facilities with other centres where possible.

Summary of school responsibilities in the event of disruption to examinations

- Preparing plans for any disruption to exams as part of centres' general emergency planning.
- Preparing candidates for examinations.
- Ensuring examinations and assessments are taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding organisations.
- Ensuring, where relevant, that assessment materials and candidate work are stored under secure conditions.
- Deciding whether the centre can open for examinations as scheduled and informing relevant awarding organisations if the centre is unable to open.
- Exploring the opportunities for alternative arrangements if the centre cannot open for

- examinations and agreeing such arrangements with the awarding organisations.
- Assessing and liaising with awarding organisations in the event of disruption to the transportation of papers.

Covid 19 Guidance

Engagement with NHS Test and Trace

You must make sure that you understand the NHS Test and Trace process and that you've read the guidance on [how schools should respond to any infections](#).

Your school or college will need to collect and keep contact information for candidates and invigilators so that you can share it with NHS Test and Trace if needed. This is particularly important for any external visitors, including any non-school staff assisting with exams, and candidates not on roll at the school or college. Every exam will have a seating plan, so you can add the names of the invigilators and cross reference them to the contact details you hold for candidates and invigilators.

Arrival and departure of candidates

- Candidates should read the [safer travel guidance](#) before planning their journey to their exam, especially where the exam is being held in a location to which the candidate does not normally travel.
- As candidates arrive before the scheduled start time of exams, you will need to keep them separate from other students arriving at the school or college.
- You should identify a location where candidates will wait before the exam that can support social distancing between group 'bubbles' as well as between on-roll and off-roll candidates.
- You should also make sure that any candidates who arrive late for the exam follow social distancing measures.
- You will need to make sure that there is a plan to manage candidates leaving the exam room and site, particularly as exams may finish at different times. As part of this, you will need to take into account any candidates who need extra time in exams.
- These considerations apply wherever the exams are taking place - whether in a school, college, private exam centre or another venue booked specifically for the purpose of taking exams. Where alternative locations are used to run exams, you will still need to manage the arrival and departure of candidates to make sure they maintain social distancing as they wait for exams, including from other members of the public who may be present in entry lobbies.

Cleaning

Exam rooms should be kept clean. Frequently touched surfaces (for example, door handles, individual desks) should be cleaned after every exam with the usual cleaning products, including the backs of chairs where candidates may pull chairs out to sit.

Rooms do not need to be left empty between exams, provided they are cleaned properly each time.

The [guidance for cleaning non-healthcare settings](#) sets out advice on general cleaning and on cleaning settings when there has been a suspected case of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Set up of the exam room

Desks should not be set up face to face. For GCSE, AS and A level exams, the minimum distance in all directions from centre to centre of candidates' chairs must be 1.25 metres, following JCQ's [Instructions for Conducting Examinations](#). This distance is the minimum that must be maintained for students within a group bubble. For VTQ exams, you should follow the guidance specified by the relevant awarding organisation.

All other candidates, whether in different group bubbles, private candidates or those returning to school or college to take exams, should be seated 2 metres apart from each other. These candidates can be seated in the same room.

There is no overall limit on the number of candidates who can sit in a room, as long as desks are correctly spaced. The upper limit to the number of candidates who can take an exam in a room together depends on the desk spacing requirements.

The importance of adequate ventilation should also be considered when selecting the room for exams. Good ventilation is important and you should maximise this wherever possible, for example, opening windows and propping open doors (not fire doors) where safe to do so (bearing in mind safeguarding in particular). For more advice, read the Health and Safety Executive [guidance on air conditioning and ventilation during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#).

Invigilators may walk up and down aisles between desks, but there must also be points in the room where an invigilator can stand at least 2 metres from the nearest desks and see all the candidates in the room.

Face coverings

- Candidates and invigilators do not need to wear face coverings during exams, but they may wear them if they wish to.
- Candidates and invigilators should wear face coverings in communal areas if the exam centre is in an area of local intervention, or if you have chosen to use face coverings in communal areas.
- For more information, read the guidance on [face coverings in education](#).
- Everyone who uses public transport to travel to exams should follow the requirements for wearing face coverings.

Invigilators

- Your school or college will have protocols in place for visitors and temporary staff. Invigilators can move between different schools and colleges. They should minimise

contact and maintain as much distance as possible from other staff. Further guidance about supply and peripatetic staff is in the school workforce section of the [actions for schools during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#).

- Before the exams, you will need to tell invigilators what they need to do to minimise contact and maintain as much distance as possible from other staff.
- Invigilators do not need to wear gloves when collecting exam scripts from candidates but should wash their hands thoroughly and more frequently than usual and particularly after handling exam papers.

Maintaining distance between staff and candidates

- You should advise invigilators and other staff to stand alongside candidates when interacting with them, rather than face to face.
- For encounters of over 15 minutes, for example, when scribes, readers or other individuals are supporting candidates, staff should maintain a 2 metre distance where possible, for example using a separate room from other candidates. If staff cannot maintain a 2 metre distance, they should avoid close face to face contact and minimise time spent within 1 metre of others. These arrangements may not be possible when working with some candidates who have complex needs, in which case these candidates' educational support should be provided as normal during exams.
- If candidates need to leave the exam room and need to be accompanied for more than 15 minutes, staff should maintain a 2 metre distance where possible. If this is not possible, staff should take mitigating measures, such as standing alongside the candidate and considering using a face covering.

Candidate health

The [guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infections](#) applies throughout.

School and college action

Schools and colleges must take swift action when they become aware that a candidate entered for the autumn series exams has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). They must follow the guidance outlined in [actions for schools during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#). The guidance explains that schools and colleges can contact the dedicated advice service introduced by Public Health England (PHE) and delivered by the NHS Business Services Authority. This can be reached by calling the DfE helpline on 0800 046 8687 and selecting option 1 for advice on the action to take in response to a positive case.

Candidates with symptoms

Any candidate with symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) must stay at home for 10 days from the onset of symptoms and must not leave their homes. The most important symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are the recent onset of either a:

- new continuous cough
- high temperature
- loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

Candidates should stay at home and [arrange to have a test](#) to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19).

Candidates will be unable to take exams during their period of isolation. If the candidate is not tested for coronavirus (COVID-19), they must isolate for 10 days from the onset of symptoms.

Where candidates are isolating in line with public health advice

Where a member of the candidate's household is symptomatic, the candidate must isolate for 14 days from the onset of their household member's symptoms. They cannot take exams during that period. This also applies if the candidate is asked to isolate following contact with someone with the virus. Candidates cannot take exams during their period of isolation.

Candidates in quarantine following certain foreign travel must not attend exams during their period of quarantine. See guidance on [travel corridors](#) for an up to date list of countries where quarantine is not required in England.

Where a candidate has a negative test

Candidates should follow guidance about their [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) test result](#) when they receive a negative test. The guidance sets out the circumstances where candidates do not need to self-isolate. They can attend exams in these circumstances. Candidates who are clinically extremely vulnerable from coronavirus (COVID-19)

Candidates who are clinically extremely vulnerable should refer to the [shielding guidance](#).

Reasonable adjustments

Schools and colleges must, under their Equality Act obligations, continue to make reasonable adjustments for candidates with special educational needs and disabilities.

JCQ, on behalf of its exam board members, publishes extensive guidance about how schools and colleges can support candidates with special educational needs and disabilities who may need reasonable adjustments in order to take their GCSE, AS or A level exams. JCQ has published [supplementary guidance](#) to cover the autumn 2020 exam series.

The support that candidates would have had in place for summer 2020 exams will roll forward until the end of the autumn exam series. Timescales have been published for reasonable adjustment applications for those candidates whose circumstances have changed or new needs have arisen.

The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) will need to ensure that the access arrangement is still appropriate, practicable and reasonable.

In the event of a candidate's circumstances changing, the SENCo may (where required) need to produce evidence and process an online application.