



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	May 2023
Next review due	May 2024
Summary of key changes	COVID 19 references removed; additional guidance relating to the retention of evidence and examination resilience added; reference to Industrial action included; Cyber Security 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 Public Health England..
- 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.

Examination Contingency 2023

Widespread national disruption to the taking of examinations or assessments

The governments' view across England, Wales and Northern Ireland is education in 2022 to 2023 has returned to normal. Schools are open and examinations and assessments will go ahead in summer 2023.

As education is devolved, in the event of any widespread sustained national disruption to examinations or assessments, national government departments will communicate with regulators, awarding organisations and centres prior to a public announcement. Regulators will provide advice to government departments on implications for examinations and assessments, including exam timetables

- We will take necessary steps to ensure evidence is retained of candidates' performance as directed by [Supporting resilience in the exam system in 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-resilience-in-the-exam-system-in-2023)

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 will 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:

[Emergency planning and response for education, childcare, and children's social care settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings)

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 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:

Business Manager to nominate a member of the admin team to take over responsibilities should absence of EO have the potential to affect the meeting of deadlines.

- Nominated member of staff to work closely with EO in order to ensure familiarity with the process

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
- 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 rooms

Centre actions:

- SENCO to step up and ensure all appropriate preparations are made including access arrangements.

Disruption to the distribution of examination papers

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

- The awarding organisations will 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.

Industrial Action

In the event of industrial action during public examinations, the Principal retains a formal role as 'head of centre' and is accountable for the conduct of the examinations and provision of facilities in our centre. Where possible we will remain open for examinations and examination candidates, even if the school is closed or restricting attendance. We will review contingency plans well in advance of each exam or assessment series.

Cyber Security

The Department for Education and the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) has been made aware of an increasing number of cyber-attacks involving ransomware infections affecting the education sector recently.

It is important that senior leaders in education settings understand the nature of the threat and the potential for ransomware to cause considerable damage to their institutions in terms of lost data and access to critical services.

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- MIS system is affected by a cyber-attack

Centre actions:

- Network Manager/IT department to back up data
- The backups are held offline
- Systems for restoring services and recovering data from the backups are tested and reliable
- In the event of an attack the Centre will enact the 'Incident Management Plan'
- Contact the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC)
- Contact the local law enforcement and Action Fraud
- Inform the DfE by emailing: securityenquiries@education.gov.uk

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

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.
- 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: [Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration - JCQ Joint Council for Qualifications](#)

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).
- 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.

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 a 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 will 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

If the awarding organisation(s) face delay in meeting the planned schedule for issuing results:

- The awarding body will 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-validate results
- The awarding organisations to re-issue results, via an 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 will 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. Rainford High will:

- Ensure examinations and assessments are taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding organisations.
- Ensure, where relevant, that assessment materials and candidate work are stored under secure conditions.
- Decide whether the centre can open for examinations as scheduled and inform relevant awarding organisations if the centre is unable to open.
- Explore the opportunities for alternative arrangements if the centre cannot open for examinations and agree such arrangements with the awarding organisations.
- Assess and liaise with awarding organisations in the event of disruption to the

transportation of papers.

Arrival and departure of candidates

- We will ensure 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, we will 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.

Reasonable adjustments

We must, under the 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.

The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) will 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.