

# The Charter School North Dulwich

## Exam Contingency Plan 2025-26

Author (s)	K Howard Davies
Functional area	Examination
Scope	
Reviewer (s)	M Pain, W Stainsby
Effective date	01/01/2026
Next review due	01/01/2027

### Key staff involved in contingency planning at The Charter School North Dulwich

Role	Name(s)
Head Of Centre (Headteacher)	Mark Pain
Deputy Headteacher	Luke Conduit-Smith
Assistant Headteacher (AHT) Raising Standards	Will Stainsby
Assistant Headteacher (AHT) of KS5	Kate Dougall
SENCo	Ruth Fairclough
Assistant SENCo	Andy Balysz
Learning Support Administrator	Nikkita Nartey
Exams Officer	Kate Howard Davies
Lead Invigilator	Jenny Oram

# Table of Contents

<b>1. Purpose of the plan .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. Causes of potential disruption to the exam process.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2.1 Staff Absence .....</b>	<b>2</b>
2.1.1 Head of Centre extended absence at key point in the exam process .....	2
2.1.2 Exams Officer extended absence at key point in the exam process.....	2
2.1.3 SENCo extended absence at key point in the exam process .....	3
2.1.4 Teaching Staff extended absence at key point in the exam process.....	3
2.1.5 Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence .....	3
2.1.6 Industrial Action – Staff .....	4
<b>2.2 Centre Closure / Facilities Disruption .....</b>	<b>6</b>
2.2.1 Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice .....	6
2.2.2 Disruption of teaching time – Centre closed for an extended period .....	6
2.2.3 Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or Centre lock down) .....	6
2.2.4 Centre unable to open as normal during the exam periods .....	6
<b>2.3 ICT Disruption.....</b>	<b>7</b>
2.3.1 Failure of ICT Systems .....	7
2.3.2 Cyber Security/ Cyber attack.....	8
<b>2.4 Failure of Wider Exams System .....</b>	<b>9</b>
2.4.1 Disruption in the distribution of examination papers .....	9
2.4.2 Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts .....	9
2.4.3 Centre unable to distribute results as normal.....	10
<b>2.5 Other Causes of Disruption .....</b>	<b>10</b>
2.5.1 Industrial action - public transport .....	10
2.5.2 Assessment evidence is not available to be marked .....	10
2.5.3 Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis - Centre remains open .....	10
2.5.4 Withdrawal of Centre’s status as an approved centre .....	11
<b>3. Succession Planning.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Appendix 2: Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Appendix 3: Advice to Centre Staff on Cyber Security.....</b>	<b>15</b>

## 1. Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at The Charter School North Dulwich. It outlines the procedures that need to be invoked in case of disruption, and the actions provided to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on our exams process.

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by the [Exam System Contingency Plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland](#), which provides guidance as to what schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted.

At all times, the Exams Officer and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will liaise with the relevant Awarding body to ensure any contingency plans meet with its requirements and that JCQ regulations are adhered to.

## 2. Causes of potential disruption to the exam process

### 2.1 Staff Absence

#### 2.1.1 Head of Centre extended absence at key point in the exam process

**Duties and responsibilities:** In a period of extended absence of the Head of Centre, the Assistant Headteacher (AHT) responsible for Raising Standards will take on the role of Head of Centre. In the event they are unavailable, these duties and responsibilities will be transferred to the Deputy Headteacher (DHT) or, failing that, a member of the SLT.

#### 2.1.2 Exams Officer extended absence at key point in the exam process

- **Planning:** In a period of extended absence of Exams Officer, the AHT (Raising Standards), with the help of other members of the administration team, will take on the responsibility of the Exams Officer. The Head of Centre and the SLT compose the yearly exam plan.

The Exams Officer is responsible for recruiting and training the Exam Invigilators. In the absence of the Exams Officer, training will be completed by the Lead Invigilator and the Learning Support Administrator. The recruiting and staffing of exams will be the responsibility of the AHT (Raising Standards).

- **Entries:** All appropriate backfilling will be completed by the Deputy Headteacher. This includes informing awarding bodies of estimated entries, passing information onto the relevant staff members and completing all exam entries before the set deadline. Heads of Departments and SLT will help with this process.

- **Pre- Exam:** The AHT (Raising Standards) and AHT (KS5) will be responsible for ensuring all students receive information about the upcoming exams, this includes exam timetables.

The Deputy Headteacher will ensure that all exam/assessment materials and candidates' work are stored under the required secure conditions, and that internal assessment marks and samples of candidates' work are submitted to the appropriate awarding bodies/external moderators.

- **Exam Time:** The Head of Centre and the Deputy Headteacher, with the support of the Lead Invigilator, are responsible for making sure the appropriate rooms are set up for the exam. They will also be responsible for candidate's scripts being returned to the awarding body once completed. The Deputy Headteacher and Heads of Department will be required to make sure all coursework is submitted on time.

AHT (KS5) and AHT (Raising Standards) are responsible for all reports and forms needing to be submitted to awarding bodies, including very late arrival, special considerations and suspected malpractice.

- **Results and Post Results:** The Deputy Headteacher, AHT (KS5) and AHT (Raising Standards) will be responsible for distributing candidates' results and administering the post-results service.

### **2.1.3 SENCo extended absence at key point in the exam process**

In a period of extended absence of the SENCo, all duties including the assessment of candidates for access arrangements will be taken up by the Assistant SENCo. Assessment can also be completed by the school-appointed Educational Psychologist. The Learning Support Administrator will be responsible for collecting and submitting all the evidence needed for the candidate's access arrangement. The Learning Support Administrator will also ensure that all access arrangements are in place for the candidate during the exam season.

### **2.1.4 Teaching Staff extended absence at key point in the exam process**

In a period of extended absence of Teaching Staff, the member of staff responsible for managing cover or HR Manager will appoint a long-term Cover Teacher to take over the lessons. Their practice in terms of assessments and teaching will be monitored by Heads of Departments and Assistant Headteachers.

### **2.1.5 Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence**

The Exams Officer is responsible for recruiting and training Exam Invigilators. In the absence of the Exams Officer, training will be completed by the Lead Invigilator. If there is a lack of exam invigilators extra staff will be hired in, from a reputable agency. The Exams Officer and the Lead Invigilator will train them prior to the start of exam season. The Learning Support Administrator will also train all Learning Support Assistants to be able to invigilate exams, especially when supporting access arrangements. The school will also use cover supervisors who have had invigilator training.

The Centre will communicate to all staff that in an emergency it may be necessary to use staff other than invigilators to ensure exams are fully supervised. All staff should be aware of exam regulations for the correct running of an exam. Subject teachers will not be used for their subject's exam.

### **2.1.6 Industrial Action – Staff**

In the event of industrial action during public examinations, the headteacher of a school or principal of an academy retains a formal role as 'Head of Centre' and is accountable for the conduct of the examinations and provision of facilities in their Centre.

The Centre will attempt to remain open for examinations and examination candidates where possible, even if the school is closed or restricting attendance.

The decision to open, restrict attendance, or close a maintained school is for the headteacher. The decision for academies rests with the academy trust, however it is usually delegated to the principal. Headteachers should consult governors, parents and the Local Authority, academy trust or diocesan representative (where appropriate) before deciding whether to close. In the event of a strike, the Department for Education expects the headteacher to take all reasonable steps to keep the school open for as many pupils as possible.

In the event of industrial action that threatens to close the school, the Head of Centre and/or Exams Officer will, where appropriate, perform the following mitigating actions:

1. Contact the relevant Awarding body promptly and follow its instructions.
2. Take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether the Centre can open.
3. Identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can take place at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant Awarding body, ensuring the secure transportation of question 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 students, parents and carers any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.
7. Communicate with any external assessors, invigilators or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable.

**After the exam** the Head of Centre and/or Exams Officer will, where appropriate, take the following mitigating actions:

1. Consider whether any student's ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply to the relevant Awarding body 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 body in line with their instructions. Never make alternative arrangements for the transportation of completed exam scripts, unless told to do so by the awarding body.

Guidance on staff deployment in the event of emergencies can be found in the Emergency Planning and Response Guidance. While employees are not required to tell their employers whether they intend to take strike action, employers are able to ask staff in advance if they intend to strike to enable them to plan how to manage the strike. Headteachers may ask other teachers to cover the classes of those taking industrial action. Where teachers are employed under the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document, however, they cannot be compelled to provide cover for other teachers during industrial action. Cover supervisors, or teachers who are employed wholly or mainly to provide cover and are not taking industrial action themselves, can be directed to provide cover

during industrial action by teachers or non-teaching staff (see Section 6 for information about directly employing individuals to cover on a strike day).

A headteacher on strike should delegate their duties to another member of the leadership team. If the whole leadership team is on strike, the governing body or academy trust can approach another staff member to carry out the headteacher's duties, for example a senior teacher or a retired headteacher employed by the school.

### Using volunteers

The arrangements for the safeguarding and supervision of children are set out in statutory guidance. In the event of a strike by teaching staff or members of the wider school workforce (such as teaching assistants or lunchtime supervisors), these arrangements allow schools to:

- use existing members of the school volunteer workforce with relevant Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks to provide supervision; and/or
- identify other new volunteers who could support existing staff or volunteers for whom relevant checks have been carried out. These volunteers would need to be supervised by another member of staff or volunteer with a DBS check.

### Pupils due to take public examinations

In addition to prioritising vulnerable children and young people and children of critical workers, The Charter School North Dulwich will consider prioritising pupils due to take public examinations and other formal assessments. This includes pupils due to take their GCSE, GCE, or vocational qualifications.

The Centre will consider what action they could take to ensure pupils due to take their GCEs, GCSEs or vocational qualifications are supported and prepared for their exams. This could involve offering catch-up lessons or arranging additional revision sessions.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6523d331aea2d000d2199bf/Handling\\_strike\\_action\\_in\\_schools.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6523d331aea2d000d2199bf/Handling_strike_action_in_schools.pdf)

## **2.2 Centre Closure / Facilities Disruption**

### **2.2.1 Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice**

- The majority of exams will take place in the Sports Hall and/or Assembly Hall. Room 044 and small rooms will be used for individual students with access arrangements. On occasions, alternative rooms may be used for various reasons, for example (but not limited to): to support the delivery requirements of specific exams (e.g. media, music, art, drama etc.), due to student numbers, or to support behavioural issues.
- In advance of the exam season, the Exams Officer will work with the member of staff responsible for managing cover to book sufficient rooms and to identify any potential rooming issues.
- If the Sports Hall is not available at short notice, provisions will be made for candidates to be placed in the Atrium and Assembly Hall to complete their exams.

- In extreme circumstances, where the whole school site is unavailable to accommodate the exam, candidates will be sent to The Charter School East Dulwich.

### **2.2.2 Disruption of teaching time – Centre closed for an extended period**

The Head of Centre will be in regular communication with parents and students about the disruption to teaching time. Teaching staff will provide the appropriate work via Microsoft Teams and/or ClassCharts. The Head of Centre and SLT will make alternative venue arrangements.

### **2.2.3 Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or Centre lock down)**

Please refer to our 'Examinations: Emergency Evacuations Procedure' in Appendix 1.

### **2.2.4 Centre unable to open as normal during the exam periods**

In line with JCQ guidance, the Centre 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 awarding body will be notified. Special consideration may be applied.

If the Centre is unable to open during the scheduled exam period, SLT, the Exams Officer and the School Premises Manager will need to be present to assess the situation. If this staff team is unable to get on to the school grounds (for example due to adverse weather), then the examinations will not be able to go ahead. In this situation, the Centre will undertake the following actions:

- The Head of Centre will contact the relevant awarding body to inform them of the situation and devise a plan for the candidates. This may include using the contingency day in June or seeking permission to start the exam later than the published start time.
- If it is possible to access parts of the building, the available space will be used for candidates sitting exams only.
- The Head of Centre will explore other options including using any available space at The Charter School East Dulwich or the neighbouring local Church Hall. If none of these options are possible, the Head of Centre will contact Southwark Council to help the school find the nearest available space.
- The Head of Centre's PA will contact candidates to inform them of the changes via all communication platforms, including the school website.
- If the school must remain closed for a prolonged period, which may affect more than one examination, students may need to sit the exams at an alternative venue.
- Transport for students will be arranged as soon as possible, along with necessary other arrangements such as exam desks and secure transportation of papers.

## 2.3 ICT Disruption

### 2.3.1 Failure of ICT Systems

In the event that failure of IT systems affects any aspect of the exams cycle the Centre will seek to mitigate the impact of the disruption by enacting the following plan.

*Criteria for implementation of the plan:*

- IT system corruption affecting candidates' work
- MIS system failure at final entry deadline
- MIS system failure during exams preparation
- MIS system failure at results release time

*Centre actions:*

- Ensure where candidates' work is produced electronically that it is backed up and consider the contingency of candidates' work being backed up on two separate devices, including one off-site back up via the Cloud. Implement appropriate security arrangements which protect candidates' work in the event of IT system corruption and cyber-attacks.
- All exam entries are made well in advance of the deadline. Should there be an IT failure during this process, the Exams Officer, with the support of the administration team, will contact the relevant awarding bodies and manually enter the students on the awarding bodies' secure extranet sites using the IT services at The Charter School East Dulwich.
- Members of our IT department are available throughout the school year, at every exam session and on results days to resolve any IT issues which may be encountered. If IT are unavailable, the Head of Centre will appoint a member of staff to support in this role.

### 2.3.2 Cyber Security/ Cyber attack

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. 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.

The Centre will seek to reduce as far as possible the likelihood of a cyber attack, and thereby mitigate for the possibility of disruption to exams, by ensuring that procedures are in place to maintain the security of user accounts in the following ways:

- ensuring that all members of Centre staff who access awarding bodies' online systems undertake annual cyber security training. The training must include:
  - the importance of creating strong, unique passwords for all accounts;
  - keeping all account details strictly confidential;
  - the critical role of Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) in protecting against unauthorised access;
  - how to properly set up and use MFA for both centre and awarding bodies' systems;

- an awareness of all types of social engineering/phishing attempts;
- the importance of staff quickly reporting any suspicious activity, events, incidents and encouraging a safe and supportive reporting culture.

Certificates of completed staff cyber training must be downloaded and held on file for inspection. The NCSC training resource provides a certificate of completion of cyber training.

- developing and maintaining a comprehensive cyber security policy for the Centre. The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) provides resources to assist centres in creating such policies
- implementing and enforcing robust security measures, including:
  - mandatory MFA for all accounts and systems containing exam-related information, including those that interface between awarding body and centre systems, to enhance security and protect sensitive data;
  - regularly reviewing and updating security settings to align with current best practices.
- updating any passwords that may have been exposed
- setting up secure account recovery options
- reviewing and managing connected applications
- monitoring accounts and regularly reviewing account access, including removing access when no longer required
- ensuring authorised members of staff securely access awarding bodies' online systems in line with awarding body regulations regarding cyber security and the JCQ document Guidance for centres on cyber security. Authorised staff will have access, where necessary, to a device which complies with awarding bodies' MFA requirements
- reporting any actual or suspected compromise of an awarding body's online systems immediately to the relevant awarding body.

More details of cyber security advice given to centre staff can be found in **Appendix 3**.

In the event that the Centre's MIS system is affected by a cyber attack, the Centre will take the following actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption caused:

- 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
- Use passwords to protect data
- Protect against malware (e.g. cyber security)
- Contact the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC)
- Contact the local law enforcement and Action Fraud
- Inform the DfE by emailing: [securityenquiries@education.gov.uk](mailto:securityenquiries@education.gov.uk)
- Inform the impacted awarding bodies
- Act on the advice of awarding bodies

## **2.4 Failure of Wider Exams System**

### **2.4.1 Disruption in the distribution of examination papers**

The Exams Officer will contact the relevant awarding body to arrange an alternative method to deliver the exam papers. Until an agreement is reached, the exam scripts will be stored securely. In the event of disruption of this kind, mitigating actions are likely to include:

- Awarding bodies to provide centres with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network. The Centre would ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions and have plans in place to facilitate such an action. Awarding bodies would provide guidance on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances.
- As a last resort, and in close collaboration with centres and regulators, awarding bodies may consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date.

### **2.4.2 Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts**

All scripts are returned using the designated dispatch methods - which is the yellow label method. If this transportation method is not possible, the Exams Officer will contact the relevant awarding body to arrange another method of transportation.

### **2.4.3 Centre unable to distribute results as normal**

Where the Centre is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates, or to facilitate post-results service, the Exams Officer will contact the awarding body to look for alternative ways to obtain results.

The Head of Centre will designate a member of SLT or the administration team to contact candidates to inform them of the changes via communication platforms, including the school website, ClassCharts and email.

## **2.5 Other Causes of Disruption**

### **2.5.1 Industrial action - public transport**

In the event of disruption to public transport which prevents students from reaching the Centre on exam day, the Centre will seek to mitigate the impact of the disruption on affected students by enacting the following plan.

*Criteria for implementation of the plan:*

- Candidates unable to take examinations due to planned lack of public transport.
- Candidates unable to take examinations due to sudden disruption to public transport.
- Candidates arrive late due to public transport problems.

*Centre actions:*

- Monitor news agencies on a regular basis to identify any potential transportation difficulties.

- Centre to utilise own bus facilities to transport candidates to Centre.
- Centre to liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with the relevant awarding organisations.
- Centres to apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements.
- Latecomers to be permitted to take their examinations providing they are within the JCQ regulations and not deemed very late arrivals.

### **2.5.2 Assessment evidence is not available to be marked**

If there is large-scale damage or destruction of completed examination scripts/assessment evidence before they can be marked the Exams Officer will contact the relevant awarding body to receive guidance and provide them with the relevant information needed for them to generate a mark for the student. The relevant AHT, Deputy Headteacher or the Head of Centre will contact the candidates and their parents to inform them of what has happened.

Where completed examination scripts or assessment evidence does not reach the awarding body, not because of damage or destruction, awarding bodies will be asked to generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding bodies. Where marks cannot be generated by awarding bodies candidates may need to retake affected assessments in a subsequent assessment series.

### **2.5.3 Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis - Centre remains open**

The procedure and consequence for absence are outlined to candidates through the examinations booklet, which is given to them each year.

If a candidate does not arrive for an exam, the Attendance Officer with the support of the AHT KS5 and year group lead (or SLT) will call the candidate's home to obtain more information about the reason for their absence. Staff will help the candidate(s) wherever possible to get into Centre, for example by collecting them in the school minibus if necessary.

If a candidate is able to sit the exam but cannot attend the Centre due to a crisis, appropriate communication with the relevant awarding body would be undertaken by the Exams Officer and alternative options would be explored, such as the candidate taking the exam at home or at an alternative exam Centre.

If appropriate special consideration will be applied for.

### **2.5.4 Withdrawal of Centre's status as an approved centre**

Should the Centre have its provider approval withdrawn by an awarding body, the Centre will undertake the following actions to mitigate against the impact on students expecting to take a qualification with that awarding body:

- Begin the appeal process as soon as possible
- Identify and address all concerns raised by the awarding body to have approval reinstated

- Send all portfolios and assessment records to the relevant awarding body for re-evaluation
- Return all certificates received
- Support students in locating a suitable alternative provider
- Inform all affected learners from the centre.

### 3. Succession Planning

It is important to have a succession plan in place to address anticipated and unexpected changes in key exams staff, so that the Centre can continue to deliver assessments smoothly. For the exams team, this is particularly critical given the statutory deadlines and regulatory requirements the Centre must meet.

- **Identifying Key Roles and Risks:** We will regularly review our exams staffing structure to identify key personnel involved in the exams process, including the Exams Officer, SENCO and senior leaders with responsibility for examinations; critical periods when staff absence would have the greatest impact; staff who may leave or retire in the next few years and whether there is someone who could fill their post; succession gaps where we lack internal capacity to cover key roles.
- **Developing Exams Expertise:** This will include maintaining comprehensive procedural guides for all aspects of the exams cycle; enabling potential successors to shadow the Exams Officer during key periods; and supporting staff to attend relevant JCQ training and awarding body updates.
- **Knowledge Transfer:** The school will ensure continuity through regular handover meetings during transition periods, documented processes for all aspects of the exams cycle (including entries and registrations, access arrangement applications, invigilation management, results day procedures, and post-results services), secure storage of essential documentation, passwords, and contacts and maintenance of a calendar of critical deadlines maintained and accessible to relevant staff.
- **Talent Identification and Development:** For exams roles, we will identify staff who demonstrate strong attention to detail and organisational skills, ability to work under pressure and meet strict deadlines, understanding of regulatory compliance and effective communication with students, staff, and external bodies. Once we have identified talent, we will develop it through attendance at JCQ training events, awarding body webinars and updates, training on exams management systems, mentoring from experienced exams officers.

## **Appendix 1: Examinations: Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

All Exam Invigilators are trained in this procedure and understand the actions they must take in the event of a fire alarm or other emergency that leads to an evacuation of the exam room. The senior invigilators in each venue are issued with the relevant emergency evacuation procedures. The evacuation procedure is displayed in each examination venue. Invigilators should:

- Stop the candidates writing and place their paper face down on the table.
- Remind candidates that they should remain in silence and not in communicate with any other candidate.
- Instruct candidates to close their exam papers, booklets and/or scripts and leave all examination material on their table.
- Collect the attendance register (to ensure all candidates are present).
- Evacuate the examination room in silence and in single file via the safest exit and in accordance with the school evacuation procedures. Candidates should follow the instructions given by the appropriate authority (Lead Invigilator, Exams Officer or a member of the School Senior Leadership Team).
- The Lead Invigilator or Exams Officer will be the last to leave the room, having secured the evacuation of all candidates and the room.
- Candidates will proceed to the relevant school evacuation point and line up in exam room order, leaving all papers and exam materials in the exam room.
- The Lead Invigilator or Exams Officer will take the register.
- The Exams Officer will report to the Head of Centre or Deputy Headteacher via radio.
- Make sure that the candidates are supervised as closely as possible while they are out of the examination room to make sure that there is no discussion about examinations.
- Lead Invigilator and Exams Officer will make note of the time of interruption and how long it lasted.
- Exams Officer will liaise with the Head of Centre (or his/her nominated deputy) as to whether the session will continue.
- The candidates will continue the exam with the full working time set for the examination.
- Exams Officer will make a full report of the incidents and of any action taken and send it to the relevant exam board.
- The Exams Officer will complete the 'special consideration' for far all students who are affected.

## **Appendix 2: Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning**

### **Ofqual**

This guidance was updated on the 1 May 2022 to include links to coronavirus (COVID-19) related contingency, health and support pages published by the Department for Education, Welsh Government and government in Northern Ireland. We have not however, updated this document in other ways as the overall ethos still applies. You will need to make sure you are aware of your specific responsibilities for local and national school preparations and contingencies and advice from relevant public health bodies.

<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>

### **JCQ**

General regulations <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>

### **GOV.UK**

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

### **Appendix 3: Advice to Centre Staff on Cyber Security**

Centre Staff are given the following advice to maintain the security of user accounts:

- Keep all account details secret
- Never share login/password details or additional factor/authentication codes with anyone else. Attackers will often try to trick people into sharing those details with them by pretending to be from their awarding body, a technical support team or other organisation.
- Each person who needs access to a system should request their own user account and never share an account assigned for their use with anyone else. Remember that anything done with an account assigned to someone will be attributed to that person in the first instance. Enable additional security settings wherever possible
- Activate two-step verification (2SV)/two-factor verification (2FA) or multi-factor authentication (MFA) wherever available. Doing this adds a layer of account security that requires users to take an additional action or to provide an additional verification such as a fingerprint, code, or confirmation via an authentication app. 2SV/2FA /MFA only helps to protect users if the extra steps/factors are protected. Attackers will try to trick users into granting access/sharing codes, so these factors need to be kept as securely as passwords.
- Update any passwords that may have been exposed
- If it is believed passwords may have been exposed/become known to others, they should be changed as soon as possible. The new passwords should not be shared with anyone.
- Updated account recovery options such as alternate email accounts or phone numbers should be set up or kept to facilitate access to accounts in case of a lockout or compromise. Attackers will try to use account recovery options (e.g. another email account specified as the recovery account) to take over an account, so wherever possible 2SV/2FA/MFA security should be enabled on all such accounts to ensure they remain secure from hackers.
- Review and manage connected applications
- Regularly review and remove access for third-party applications or services that no longer require access to accounts. Attackers can breach services that users have been given access to and then use that access to attempt to access the user's accounts. Access should only be provided to trusted services. Centre staff should be particularly cautious when interacting with content and services (e.g. quizzes, prize draws, surveys etc.) on social media platforms as these are often used by attackers to access user information.
- Be cautious when granting permissions to applications and grant only the necessary access required for them to function. This is particularly relevant where apps ask for permissions that do not seem to make sense given the nature of the app. For example, a Word Search app that wants access to a user's contacts and be able to send SMS messages should be regarded with suspicion. Only download and install applications with established reputations from trusted sources.
- Passwords should not be saved to local web browsers where there is shared access to a device or web browser. An exception to this is where a secure password manager extension is used in a browser that requires unlocking (e.g. with another password) before the saved account details can be retrieved, however care should be taken to ensure that this is locked/signed out of after use.
- Saving account details (usernames/passwords) on local web browsers that anyone using that browser can then access weakens account security. Enabling additional security controls on accounts such as 2SV/2FV/MFA or using a secure password manager can prevent others from accessing accounts in such circumstances.

- When using a shared browser, browser history and caches should be cleared out after use. The use of private browsing functions to reduce the usage trail left on any such browser should also be considered. Stay alert for all types of social engineering/phishing attempts
- Care should be taken if unsolicited or unexpected emails, instant messages, or phone calls are received asking for account credentials or personal or confidential information. Passwords and 2FA/MFA authentication codes should not be given out to anyone. Attackers will often try to 'hack the human' first as it is cheaper and quicker for them than a technical attack. Centre staff should develop a healthy wariness of anyone or anything that seems to want to gain their trust, rush them into doing something or that just seems off. If in doubt, hang up/do not reply and do not click on links or take any action and check with a trusted party via a secure channel (i.e. call awarding body customer services via a known support number, using a different phone).
- Users should never approve or authenticate a login request that they did not initiate. Attackers who obtain a username and password will try to get the user to share any 2FA/ MFA code with them or to approve the login request via some other means. They may try to convince the user that they need to confirm their identity and will send a secret code that the user needs to read out to them or ask for approval of a request they send in an authenticator app. In reality they are attempting to login to the account, are triggering the 2FA/MFA challenge and are trying to trick the user into giving them that code or approving access. Requests to share codes/approve logins should not be approved and requests to do so should be treated with a high degree of suspicion. 4
- Do not click on suspicious links, download attachments or scan QR codes from unknown sources. QR codes are easy for attackers to generate and are being increasingly used in phishing attacks. Caution is needed when scanning a QR code and wherever possible a secure QR code scanner with a good reputation should be used to help gauge whether a QR code is suspicious or malicious.
- Verify the authenticity of any communication by contacting the organisation directly through official known channels. Be wary of unsolicited inbound phone calls even where the caller's number appears genuine. Attackers will sometimes use number 'spoofing' services that mask their real number and make it look like the call is from a genuine trusted number. If in doubt, hang up and call back via a known trusted number.
- Report any phishing attempts which reference awarding bodies/their systems to the awarding body concerned immediately. JCQ and awarding bodies can send out communications to centres where notable attacks are observed, but rely on centres and centre staff to flag notable attacks to them. Any such attempts should be reported to awarding bodies. Monitor accounts and review account access regularly
- Centre staff accounts should be routinely reviewed for any suspicious, unusual or unauthorised activity. If any suspicious, unusual or potentially unauthorised activity on awarding body systems is observed this should be immediately reported to the relevant awarding body, particularly if it is believed that user account security may have been compromised.
- Ensure user access is reviewed promptly for staff who have left the centre. Leaving ex-employee access in place increases the danger of inappropriate/unlawful access to systems and data.
- Review levels of access regularly to ensure accounts have the minimum level of access required for their current role. Over-privileged accounts present an increased risk should an attacker gain access to the centre's systems. It might seem easier to give staff access to everything, but if an attacker gets into a user account, they will also have access to everything!