

BRANNEL SCHOOL

EXCELLENCE | CREATIVITY | COMMUNITY



Exam Contingency Policy

2025-26

Purpose of this Policy

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the examination and assessment process. By outlining actions/procedures to be invoked in case of disruption it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on processes at CELT Schools.

Alongside internal processes this plan is informed by the Ofqual Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland which provides guidance in the document 'What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted', the JCQ Joint Contingency Plan for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the JCQ document Preparing for disruption to examinations.

This plan details how CELT Schools comply with the JCQ's General Regulations for Approved Centres by having in place a policy for inspection that must be reviewed and updated annually by a member of the senior leadership team and communicated within the centre:

- a contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination/assessment administration and delivery

Contingency arrangements

The centre must have an up to date written contingency plan.

The contingency plan must cover all aspects of examination/assessment administration and delivery. Senior leaders must have robust contingency arrangements in place that will minimise the risk to examination/assessment administration and delivery and any adverse impact on candidates.

The plan must cover the following scenarios:

- the head of centre, relevant senior leader(s) with oversight of examination and assessment administration, SENCo (or equivalent role), examinations officer or any other key staff essential to the examination process being absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle
- the potential impact of other events such as flooding which could lead to all or parts of the centre becoming unavailable
- potential issues with the centre's IT systems

As part of the contingency plan the centre must identify an alternative site or alternative sites which can be used if examinations cannot be conducted at the registered address. Larger centres may require more than one potential alternative site or different sites for different year groups.

The centre must have at least one senior member of staff (senior designated contact) who is available to manage emergency requests from awarding bodies that are results

related during the summer holidays. However, a number of contacts can be provided to reduce the risk of this falling on one individual throughout the summer holidays.

The centre must ensure where candidates' work is produced electronically it is backed up and should consider the contingency of candidates' work being backed up on two separate devices, including one off-site back up via the Cloud. Appropriate security arrangements must be implemented which protect candidates' work in the event of IT system corruption and cyber-attacks.

National Centre Number Register and other information requirements

The head of centre will ensure that the centre completes the National Centre Number Register annual update by the end of October every year (even if there are no changes to centre details) which includes providing senior designated contact details (this might include a personal mobile number and/or email address). These must be the contact details of someone who can be reached in an emergency if the centre is closed over the summer and who can mobilise resources to respond to the issue.

Head of centre/senior leader(s) with oversight of examination and assessment administration absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle

Where the head of centre may be absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle, main duties and responsibilities will be escalated in line with the exam escalation process.

Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

1. Exams officer extended absence at a critical stage of the exam 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 candidate's 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
- candidate's 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 post-results services

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- Identify the likely length of absence of the Exams Officer
- Nominate members of the Data Team, Invigilation Team and Senior Leadership Team to take over the exam planning and delivery in the absence of the Exams Officer
- Guide the staff member covering the exams officer as to when key tasks are required in the management and administration of the exam cycle
- Ensure all exam support information for exam planning and delivery is available for covering staff including details for The Exams Office and awarding body websites which hold further exam support information should it be required

2. SENCo (or equivalent role) extended absence at a critical stage of 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 listed above

The centre will:

- Identify how long the SENCo will be absent and the Senior leadership Team (SLT), Deputy SENCo and KS4 Heads of Year will work with the Exams Officer to arrange for access arrangement paperwork to be completed in a timely manner
- Provide external access arrangement testing if necessary. Paperwork requiring completion and submission to JCQ will be completed by the deputy SENCo
- Enable the Exam Officer to take the lead on the delivery of access arrangements in exams and allocation of facilitators with the support from SLT
- In the event of a student taking an exam where access arrangements should have been applied for but were not, special consideration will be requested for the candidate by the Exams Officer

3. Teaching staff (or other key staff essential to the examination process) extended absence at a critical stage of 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 (including controlled assessment and coursework) 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 listed above

The centre will:

Enable the Exam Officer to provide early/estimated entries to the awarding body

- Ensure the Exams Officer has attended regular training (CPD) to enable them to have knowledge of all written, Non Examination Assessments (NEA), internal and external examination/assessment deadlines for each subject
- Where possible use an existing subject teacher to support candidates to complete outstanding NEA and internal assessments at this critical stage of the exam cycle.
- Ensure any pre-release material is downloaded from the Exam Board secure websites by the exams officer, but if it is felt that the candidates have been disadvantaged by the lateness of receiving pre-release material then the Centre will apply for special consideration
- Ensure that if due to teacher absence entry information was not submitted to an awarding body within the stated deadline, the candidate will still be entered and the Centre will pay any late fees incurred
- In the case of Centre assessed marks not being submitted to the Awarding Body within the stated deadline, the Centre can apply to the Exam Board for a time extension to allow for alternative internal or external staff to mark assessments, complete moderation, inform candidates of marks, allow students access to the appeal process and input marks to awarding bodies

4. Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Failure to recruit and train sufficient invigilators to conduct exams
- Invigilator shortage on peak exam days
- Invigilator absence on the day of an exam

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- Train non-teaching staff to cover Invigilator and facilitator absence
- Contact JCQ to request an increase of the reader ratio from 1 facilitator to 4 readers to 1 facilitator to 6 readers (if this does not disadvantage candidates in any way)
- In the event of large numbers of access arrangements, the Centre will contact awarding bodies to seek approval for split sessions in order to deliver all the timetabled examinations. Candidates will be supervised outside of normal exam time periods if this contingency is implemented

5. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venue(s) 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 listed above

The centre will:

- (where main exam venue(s) unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time) where possible, make use of other available rooms within the centre, prioritising candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding body
- (where main exam venue(s) unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time) where possible, move to alternative venue, prioritising candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned

- Alternative site(s) details: St Stephen Churchtown Academy, Creakavose, St Stephen, St Austell, PL26 7NZ **OR** St Stephen Community Centre, Fore Street, St Stephen, St Austell, PL26 7NN
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue

Communication details:

Candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) will be informed/communicated with via the following ways:

- School Facebook page
- SIMs InTouch email system
- SIMs InTouch Text message system
- ensure the secure transportation of question papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue
- (after the exam) consider whether any candidate's ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

Other centre actions:

- Identify if any further exams that will be affected by the disruption and plan for additional use of the alternative venue
- Communicate to candidates/parents/careers if the continuation of examination series will remain at the alternative venue so candidates can plan and do not miss any future examinations

6. Cyber security

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Where any incidents might compromise any aspect of assessment delivery, such as a cyber-attack

Other criteria:

- Where lack of cyber security staff training might compromise assessment delivery, such as a cyber attack Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- Make sure all staff who have responsibility for the administration or delivery of examinations receive annual, up to date cyber security awareness training

- Maintain an up to date register of all computers and user accounts used for examinations and assessment administration.
- Ensure all devices are secured with up to date anti-malware and software updates
- Review and manage connected applications in line with JCQ's 'Guidance for centres on cyber security'
- Implement the Centre IT Incident Response Plan and refer to the Disaster Recovery Policy in the event of a cyber attack.

7. Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Other criteria:

- Loss of candidate NEA work
- Awarding body online secure portals unable to be accessed
- Candidate access arrangements unable to be fulfilled e.g. computer reader

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- Make examination entries directly with each individual exam board and download results directly from the exam board websites via a safe device
- Make retrospective entries to ensure the MIS system is up to date when the MIS system is back on line and operational
- During exam preparation time make sure hard copies of entries are held securely
- Make sure the Exams Assist portal can be accessed via a safe device with WIFI access via an external dongle
- Seek advice from the Centre's MIS support team should access to the Centre's MIS platform be long-term.
- The trust IT lead and the CELT School IT Incident Response Plan will also be implemented.
- Any on-demand online exams will be rescheduled (if possible), or entries made for a later season if applicable. Advice will be sought from the awarding body

- Apply for special consideration for candidates who are unable to access allocated access arrangements or for any lost work for each exam affected

8. Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lockdown)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Whole centre evacuation (or lockdown) 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 listed above

The centre will:

- Refer to and invoke the CELT School emergency evacuation policy/procedure in line with JCQ's 'Centre emergency evacuation procedure'
- contact the relevant awarding body as soon as possible and follow its instructions
- where accommodation is limited, prioritise candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- (after the exam) consider whether any candidate's ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

9. 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 listed above

The centre will:

- recognise it remains the responsibility of the centre to prepare students, as usual, for examinations
- facilitate alternative methods of learning communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) information relating to alternative methods of learning

Communication details:

Candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) will be informed/communicated with via the following ways:

- School Facebook page
- SIMs InTouch email system
- SIMs InTouch Text message system
- take advice offered by the awarding body regarding alternative arrangements for conducting examinations that may be available
- take advice offered by the awarding body on the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations
- advise candidates, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date

Other centre actions:

Quality assures learning delivered in other formats to make sure it is fit for purpose and does not lead to candidates being disadvantaged compared to other candidates in other centres.

10. Candidates may not be able to take examinations - centre remains open

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Candidates may not be able to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal because of a crisis

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- focus on options that enable candidates to take their examinations (referencing the JCQ document Preparing for disruption to examinations)
- take advice offered by the awarding body on the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations
- discuss alternative arrangements with the awarding body if a candidate misses an exam or loses their assessment due to an emergency, or other event, outside of the candidate's control
- identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding body, ensuring the secure transportation of questions papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue

11. Centre may not be able to open for examinations

(including in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre may not be able to open as normal for scheduled examinations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- focus on enabling candidates to take their examinations take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether the centre is able to open
- contact the relevant awarding body as soon as possible and follow its instructions (This could include implementing alternative arrangements for the conducting of examinations and notifying the JCQ Centre
- Inspection Service of an alternative site arrangement by submitting the JCQ Alternative Site form online, using the Centre Admin Portal)
- contact the relevant awarding body as soon as possible and follow its instructions
- discuss alternative arrangements with the awarding body if the exam or assessment cannot take place
- follow guidance provided by the awarding body on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances where accommodation is limited, prioritise candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue
- Alternative site(s) details: St Stephen Churchtown Academy, Creakavose, St Stephen, St Austell, PL26 7NZ **OR** St Stephen Community Centre, Fore Street, St Stephen, St Austell, PL26 7NN

12. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Disruption to the distribution of examination papers to the centre in advance of examinations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- liaise with awarding bodies regarding the provision of electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network and will ensure when copies are received/made these are stored under secure conditions
- follow guidance provided by the awarding body on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances understand that as a last resort, and in close collaboration with centres and regulators, awarding organisations will consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue

Other centre actions:

Liaise with other centres in the CELT trust to securely gain access to either electronic or hard copies of papers with the approval of the awarding bodies and ensure when copies are received/made these are stored under secure conditions in line with JCQ document 'information for conducting examinations'

13. Delay in collection arrangements for 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 listed above

The centre will:

- where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding organisations arrange collections, seek advice from the relevant awarding organisations and will not make its own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding organisation
- for any examinations where the centre makes its own arrangements for transportation, investigate alternative dispatch options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ document Instructions for conducting examinations
- ensure the secure storage of completed examination scripts until as close to the collection time as possible

Other centre actions:

- Contact the awarding body gain approval to access the 'yellow label' service via a local post office.

14. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Large scale damage to or destruction of completed examination scripts/assessment evidence before it can be marked
- Completed examination scripts/assessment evidence does not reach awarding organisations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- liaise with the awarding body to determine if candidate marks for affected assessments may be able to be generated based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding body
- where marks cannot be generated by awarding body, inform candidates they may need to retake the affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series

15. Centre unable to distribute results as normal (including in the event of the centre being unavailable on results day owing to an unforeseen emergency) or facilitate post-results services

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 listed above

The centre will:

- make arrangements to access its results at an alternative venue/share facilities with another centre if this is possible, in agreement with the relevant awarding body
- make arrangements to coordinate access to post-results services from an alternative venue
- make arrangements to make post-results requests at an alternative location
- contact the relevant awarding body if electronic post-results requests are not possible
- inform candidates of any alternative arrangements in place for the distribution of results and the facilitation of post-results services